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THE
BRITISH NOVELISTS;

WITH
AN ESSAY;

AND
PREFACES,

BIOGRAPHICAL AND CRITICAL,

BY

MRS. BARBAULD.

==
VOL. XXXV.

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Z E L U C O.

VARIOUS VIEWS
OF
HUMAN NATURE,
TAKEN
FROM LIFE AND MANNERS,
FOREIGN AND DOMESTIC.

BY DR. MOORE.

----- Cur tamen hos tu
Evasisse putes, quod diri conscia facti
Mens habet attonitos, et surdo verbere cædit,
Occultum quatiente animo tortore flagellum?
Pœna autem vehemens, ac multo sævior illis,
Quas et Cæditius gravis invenit aut Rhadamanthus,
Nocte dieque suum gestare in pectore testem.

Juv.

IN TWO VOLUMES,
VOL. II.

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

FOREIGN MARKETING

REPORT

FOR THE YEAR 1914

29,000,000 CORDS OF WOOD

AND

1,000,000 CORDS OF WOOD

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
FOREIGN MARKETING
REPORT
FOR THE YEAR 1914
29,000,000 CORDS OF WOOD
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1,000,000 CORDS OF WOOD

ZELUCO.

CHAPTER LI.

"Les passions les plus violentes nous laissent quelquefois du relâche; mais la vanité nous agite toujours." ROCHEFOUCAULT.

ZELUCO, who was of a most suspicious temper, now imagined that Father Pedro acted in concert with Madame de Seidlits, and that the desperate state of her affairs had produced an alteration in the sentiments of her daughter, of which they had informed him, that he might push a renewal of the proposal of marriage without delay.—He thought also that the monk's zeal had made him overshoot his commission, by imprudently mentioning the circumstance of the sale of the jewels: for he was convinced, that one reason for their wishing to have the ceremony speedily concluded, was to prevent *this* and other proofs of their poverty from appearing. As he now believed, therefore, that it was in his power to obtain Laura in marriage whenever he pleased, that very conviction acting on his capricious and vicious disposition, disinclined him to it, and determined him to renew his original scheme of seduction, which he flattered himself the distresses of poverty, joined to the credit of his late exploit, would greatly facilitate.

Laura, though unacquainted with the disagreeable accounts which her mother had received from Germany, or with the exact state of the circumstances in

which she had been left by her father, knew in general that they were narrow, and therefore would have been pleased with a more severe system of œconomy than was agreeable to her mother. A knowledge of this was one reason why Madame de Seidlits had always represented their situation in the most favourable light to her daughter.

This young lady, notwithstanding the admiration she never failed to excite, was by no means fond of appearing often in public. For what are called public amusements, she had but a very moderate relish; and stood in no need of them as a resource for passing her time.

She had such a taste for reading as afforded a very pleasing source of entertainment and improvement to her mind, without inclining her to despise or neglect other occupations becoming her age and sex. Her natural good sense, taste and accomplishments, while they rendered her independent of company, made her more entertaining in it: without being over-reserved, nothing could be more modest than her deportment; and very few women possessed the talent of conversing in a more easy and agreeable manner. Her mind being undisturbed by passion, serene through innocence, naturally cheerful, and easily amused, she could have lived happy in a very limited society, and in the delightful occupation of promoting her mother's happiness, and that of all around her.

Madame de Seidlits was somewhat of a different character: although Laura was the warmest object of her affection, yet she stood in need of amusements, and had a taste for a greater share of elegant superfluities than her revenue could supply. Had she conformed herself exactly to her daughter's taste, they could have lived free from debt upon the pension, and interest of the money left by her husband; but as she often followed her own, they must have been embarrassed

in a short time, even although their banker's failure had not happened.

The particular article of expense which gave Laura most uneasiness, was what regarded her dress. Her own taste in dress was elegantly simple, and in her was so becoming, that all who beheld her were of opinion that additional ornament would tend to diminish the lustre of her beauty; yet when in compliance with her mother's taste she adopted ornaments to the height of the mode, the same beauty shone conspicuous through all the variations, and in spite of the extravagances of fashion.

While Madame de Seidlits endeavoured to assume the appearance of serenity and cheerfulness before Laura, she could not resist a real depression of spirits. She saw the necessity of narrowing the limited plan of expense she had with difficulty hitherto followed, and was uncertain whether any system of œconomy would relieve her from a species of distress which her spirit could ill support, and which she felt with keener anguish on Laura's account—who in reality could have supported the misfortune which was so carefully concealed from her infinitely better than her mother.

Meanwhile Zeluco visited Madame de Seidlits with most assiduous punctuality, and was always received with a cordial welcome. He saw the dejection of Madame de Seidlits and the anxiety of Laura with secret satisfaction and apparent concern; he imputed both to the distress of their circumstances, and was in daily expectation that Madame de Seidlits would apply to him for relief, which he imagined would entitle him to still greater familiarity in the family, involve her in repeated obligations to himself, and finally terminate in the success of his base designs upon the honour of Laura.

Zeluco's passion was of the grossest nature: he called it love, but with more propriety, even at its

height, it might have been denominated hatred; it was entirely selfish, unconnected with sentiment, or the happiness of its object; even in the midst of desire, he felt resentment against Laura, for the neglect and indifference which she had evinced towards him.

He took every opportunity, when he found Madame de Seidlits alone, of insinuating a desire of obliging her, and lamented, with mildness and much respect, that she was so reserved, and seemed unwilling even in the smallest instance to give him the pleasure of being of service to her.

He sometimes, on Madame de Seidlits being called out, was left for a few minutes with Laura; to her he expressed the most tender concern for her mother's health, which he dreaded was not so good as usual; was afraid of some concealed anguish, either in her body or mind; and with the most insinuating solicitude begged to know whether Laura suspected what it was; not that he presumed to make too particular an inquiry, only in general, whether she did not suspect that her mother had some secret affliction, and whether it was bodily or mental.

Laura's answers on all such occasions imported, that she hoped he was mistaken in imagining that any thing particular disturbed her mother; but even if it were so, she should be cautious of prying into what her parent judged proper to conceal.

In the mean while Madame de Seidlits flattered herself that Laura began to view Zeluco with more favourable eyes than formerly, and entertained hopes that she would at length consent to his proposals: she was determined however to leave her to herself, and adhere to the promise she had given, never to solicit her on the subject. But she found means, without apparent design, of leaving them together frequently, for a considerable space of time, in the expectation that he would gradually strengthen Laura's disposition

in his favour, and seize some happy occasion of renewing his suit, for the success of which she was more anxious than ever.

The idea that Laura, whom she justly thought formed for adding lustre to the highest and most brilliant rank of life, should undergo the mortifications of poverty, was what she could bear with less firmness, than the thought, horrid as it was, of mortifications of the same nature occurring to herself. Here Madame de Seidlits fell into a very general error, and to which parents are peculiarly liable in the establishing of their children in marriage. Her daughter's happiness, not her own, was what she had chiefly in view; but in estimating this, her own ideas of happiness, not her daughter's, were what she chiefly considered.

Laura had remarked some appearance of dejection in her mother's spirits before it was hinted to her by Zeluco; but had not made any inquiry about the cause, partly because she hoped it proceeded from no cause of importance, and partly for the reason she had given to Zeluco.

She had remarked that her mother had less dejection in Zeluco's company than when he was not present: on this account she herself was pleased with his visits; she thought herself under great obligations to him, and in consequence of these sentiments, the whole of her conduct was so much altered, that he became persuaded not only that her former prejudices were overcome, but that she had conceived a great partiality for him. He was much less surprised at this, than he had been formerly at her having viewed him with indifference; which his vanity never permitted him to think was natural, but rather the artificial offspring of Signora Sporza's malice. But she being now at a distance, he fondly believed that his personal accomplishments began to operate the same effect on the heart of Laura, which, in his opinion, they usually

did on the hearts of women of sensibility and discernment.

Madame de Seidlits had for some time expected letters from a friend at Berlin, who had engaged to write to her the real state of her banker's affairs, and how much he would be able to pay his creditors, as soon as the trustees appointed for that business should make their report. Several posts had already arrived since the time when she expected this account, without her having received any letter on a subject which interested her so much. She was sitting one day with Laura, when the servant returned from the post-office, and told her there were no foreign letters for her. She could not help discovering marks of disappointment and vexation.—I am sure, my dear mother, said Laura, will let me know, as soon as it is fit I should know, what it is which gives her uneasiness.—Being disappointed when I am in expectation of letters from my distant friends always vexes me, my dear, said Madame de Seidlits : I cannot help it.

I hope you will have agreeable accounts soon, said Laura.

I hope I shall, my dear, replied Madame de Seidlits, with a sigh ; and directly fell into a fit of musing, which brought tears into the eyes of Laura, who turned to the window, that they might not be observed by her mother.

Zeluco was introduced.—The face of Madame de Seidlits brightened, and she received him with cheerfulness and every mark of regard. The heart of Laura, who perceived the immediate effect his presence had on her mother, throbbed with warmer gratitude and good-will towards him, than even when he delivered her from the supposed robbers.

A female acquaintance of Madame de Seidlits at this instant called on her.

You are low-spirited of late, said she to Madame de

Seidlits, and keep the house too much. I am come to carry you into the fresh air for a couple of hours.

I beg you will go, said Laura eagerly to her mother; you really have been too much confined.

I will with pleasure, my dear, said Madame de Seidlits.—You will entertain Signor Zeluco while he chooses to stay.

CHAPTER LII.

“ Reserve with frankness, art with truth allied,
Courage with softness, modesty with pride.” POPE.

WHEN Madame de Seidlits and her friend had driven away, Laura asked Zeluco, whether he chose to hear an air on the harpsichord? He answered, He should prefer it to any concert, provided she would accompany it with her voice.

She played and sung a lively air. This did not exactly suit Zeluco, who wished to make serious and very pathetic love to her: he could not avoid, however, praising the tune, and the execution.

Since that air is to your taste, signor, said Laura, who was highly pleased with him on account of the good effect his visit produced on her mother, I will play another in the same style.

You play like an angel—and are an angel, cried Zeluco.

Do angels deal in music of this sort? said Laura, running over the keys with infinite rapidity, and singing a very gay air.

Zeluco being persuaded that he had been left by the mother to give him an opportunity of renewing his proposal to the daughter, and that she herself had, for some time, expected this with impatience; he construed her gaiety into a desire of captivating him,

and meditated how to address her in terms expressive of love, without conveying any idea of matrimony. He dreaded any hint of that kind, and imputed her frank and obliging behaviour to a disposition in Laura of which he determined to take the advantage.

Having finished the air, and perceiving that Zeluco was grave and pensive; she said, with a sweetness of voice and manner which would have turned a less determined villain from his purpose, You do not seem to relish this so much, signor?

I relish, cried he, every thing you do, and every thing you say; and beg to be heard on a subject of infinite importance to my happiness.

You have a right, signor, to expect to be heard by me on any subject which you yourself have not agreed to avoid, said Laura with a solemn and serious air, which the impassioned manner in which he had spoken obliged her to assume.

Although Zeluco was a little surprised at the sudden alteration which had taken place in the features of Laura, he resumed his rapturous tone: How can I avoid expressing my admiration of beauty so angelic? cried he, throwing himself on his knee, and attempting to seize her hand.

Whatever you have to say, signor, said Laura, withdrawing her hand, and speaking with firmness and dignity, you will certainly speak more at your own ease, and to my satisfaction, by keeping your seat.

Hear me, madam, said Zeluco, embarrassed and overawed.

I will hear nothing, replied she, while you continue in that posture;—it is too ridiculous.

Zeluco rose—Now, sir, said she, what have you to say?

I am much concerned, madam, resumed he, hesitating, and entirely driven from his purpose; I am sorry, I say, that I have offended you;—but I really

flattered myself, that after the marks of regard which I had the good fortune to—but those are trifles—My esteem and regard are unbounded,—and the honour I proposed,—that is, the happiness of calling you mine—My fortune, my life, I consider as nothing—that is, I mean, when put in competition—In this incoherent manner he went on, without knowing what he said.

There is a dignity and elevation in virtue which overawes the most daring profligate. No man of sense, however free in his morals, ever attempted a woman till he imagined that she had some inclination he should. Let him use what delicate terms he pleases, to what purpose can he be supposed to express his own wishes, if he does not suspect that she has the same wishes with himself? 'This is the true point of view in which women ought to consider addresses of this nature.—In what other point of view can they be considered? A woman is solicited to grant what dishonours herself. Well, her solicitor, if he is not a fool, will not, in conscience, expect that she will stoop to this without a motive, or merely to please him. What then does he expect? Why, that she will consent to please herself.

The coolness and modest dignity of Laura's manner gave at once such a check to Zeluco, that he did not discover his aim. She saw only his embarrassment, which she imputed to his being conscious of having broken the engagement which he had entered into, not to renew his proposal of marriage; for, although she had been surprised and displeased with the manner in which he had addressed her, yet she never once suspected his real scheme.

Willing, therefore, to relieve his confusion, and to be quite certain of what he meant, she, with a milder aspect, addressed him in these words: Signor Zeluco, I wish to know whether I am to construe what you say into a renewal of your former proposal.—Although

conscious that she mistook his intention, he answered her question by a bow.—Then, resumed she, I must repeat what I formerly declared on that occasion. I am truly sensible of the honour which your opinion does me. I should be happy to have any proper opportunity of showing the sense of obligation which I have for the generous services which you rendered me. You are entitled to my lasting gratitude—more is not in my power to bestow;—and gratitude alone would, in a wife, be a poor return for the generous love you profess. After this avowal, and declaring with the same breath, continued she, that the proposals you made, in point of liberality, exceed my utmost wish, it is evident, that my reason for declining them is of a nature not to be overcome, and ought therefore to be an obstacle of as great weight with you as it is with me. Indeed, if I had not been persuaded that it had at length appeared so in your eyes, I should have taken care to avoid any occasion for an explanation, equally disagreeable for you to hear, and me to repeat.

Having said this, she withdrew to another room, and left Zeluco so much surprised and confounded, that he remained fixt to the spot for some minutes before he recovered presence of mind sufficient to return to his own house.

He was now convinced that all his conjectures were erroneous, and that, notwithstanding domestic distresses, so far from having any design upon him, Laura was determined never to accept of him as a husband. He had not pondered long on this, till, in proportion as his fears of losing her augmented, his desire to marry her increased, and before the ensuing morning he would have purchased at the highest price that very situation which, the day before, he dreaded being drawn into, and had determined to use all his address to avoid.

He plainly perceived, that her reason for refusing

him proceeded from dislike ; but although this conviction rankled in his breast with the severest anguish ; he could not refuse his admiration of the delicacy and propriety of her sentiments, the candour and dignity with which they were expressed ; while the beauty and elegance of her face and person never had appeared more attractive.

CHAPTER LIII.

“ Nunc animum pietas, maternaque nomina frangunt.” OVID.

HE now regretted the language he had held to Father Pedro, and resolved to renew his confederacy with him on the basis on which it had formerly stood, resolving, at the same time, that in one shape or other she should be *his*, whatever danger or guilt might attend the accomplishment of his desires.

Ever since their last conversation Father Pedro had kept a watchful eye upon Zeluco, being suspicious that he meditated some design upon Laura which he durst not avow. These suspicions he intended to communicate to Madame de Seidlits, but he was prevented by Zeluco's entreating him to renew the matrimonial treaty. He endeavoured to give some plausible reason for his former behaviour, and Pedro was too well pleased with his present disposition to criticize with much severity his late conduct. But he was sincerely sorry that Laura seemed so determined to reject a measure which, in his eyes, appeared absolutely necessary in the present state of her mother's circumstances.

He again spoke to Madame de Seidlits on the subject of Zeluco's addresses to Laura, enumerating the advantages that would result to herself as well as to her daughter from this alliance.

Madame de Seidlits thanked him for the interest he seemed to take in her family ; adding, That perhaps she saw the advantages of such an alliance in the same light that *he* did, and had stronger reasons than he was acquainted with, for wishing that Laura were of the same way of thinking. But having the most complete conviction of the good sense, virtuous inclinations, and dutiful disposition of her daughter, to whom her approbation of Zeluco was perfectly known, she was resolved to adhere to her engagement, not to press her further on that subject. There never was one human creature, father, continued she, who had a stronger desire to oblige another, than Laura has to oblige me : she knows that few things could give me so much pleasure as her consenting to marry him ; yet she continues to reject him. What can this proceed from but a rooted dislike ? Whether this be well or ill founded, it would equally render her miserable to be united to a person she so dislikes ; and it would be the height of cruelty in me to exert maternal influence in such a cause.

Father Pedro said, He feared that Laura sacrificed her happiness to an ill-grounded prejudice.

She shall, at least, not sacrifice it to my importunity, replied Madame de Seidlits.

The efforts which Madame de Seidlits was obliged to make, to conceal the bad state of her affairs from Laura, to appear cheerful while in reality she was sad, and to adhere to her promise and resolution of giving no hint to her daughter in favour of Zeluco, hurt her health ; she lost her appetite, grew thin, and uncommonly pale : when any body took notice of this, by an affected cheerfulness, and by assertions which her whole appearance contradicted, she rendered her illness more visible and more affecting.

Alas ! madam, said Laura, why will you conceal the cause of your illness ?

I am not ill, replied she, with a sickly smile.

Let this be decided, said Laura, by a physician.

Indeed, my dear, a physician could be of no service to me.

I am certain you are not well—you are always sorrowful.

Can physicians cure sorrow?

You have then some secret sorrow, cried Laura, catching at her mother's last expression, as if it had been an avowal.—Tell me—O tell me the cause of your affliction;—confide in me;—trust your Laura.

I do confide in you, my beloved girl;—I could trust my soul with you;—but you alarm yourself without a cause.—I am happy, my love, in your affection and goodness.

Laura could not refrain from tears at these expressions of her mother; but finding that she declined to acknowledge the cause of her uneasiness, she pressed her no further. Perceiving, however, that her mother's dejection of spirits continued, and that she became more and more emaciated, the young lady was at last so greatly alarmed, that she communicated her fears to Father Pedro, entreating his counsel.

Hitherto he had abstained from the subject, in expectation that Laura would adopt this very measure.

I have been as uneasy as you can be, my dear daughter, at the visible alteration in your mother's spirits and health; and observing that she avoided giving any reason for it, I could not help endeavouring, by every means I could think of, to discover whether she had received any news to disturb her, or what the cause of such dejection could be, that every possible method might be tried for its removal.

And have you discovered the cause? cried Laura, impatiently.

Father Pedro had heard of the failure of the banker:

he began by informing her of what he had learned on that head.

Laura was in some degree relieved by this account ; her imagination had figured something worse : she dreaded that some disease of an incurable nature afflicted her mother, which, out of tenderness to her daughter, she concealed.

The distress which this man's misfortune brings will be temporary, said she ; he will surely pay some proportion, if not the whole, of his debts. My mother feels the present inconveniency more on my account than her own. I will show her how light it sits on my mind, and how cheerfully I can conform to any circumstances.—The king's pension remains—the house here, and the farm, remain.—A little time will make my mother forget this loss ; she will recover her health, and I shall again be happy.

The father then mentioned the circumstance of selling the jewels.

This affected Laura at first, because it was a proof of her mother's immediate distress ; but soon after she said, I am glad of it, it will put her at her ease for some time at least,—perhaps till the banker is able to pay part of what he owes. I am much happier, father, than I was before I knew the whole source of my dear mother's low spirits.

I wish, said the father, this were the whole.

O ! merciful Heaven ! cried Laura ; What ! is there more ?

Shall I speak, said Pedro, my real sentiments ?

Yes, certainly, cried Laura, trembling

Without any cover or disguise ? added he.

I did not think you had ever used any, said Laura.

When we are obliged to blame those we love, resumed he, it is natural to do it in the mildest manner.

.. If I have failed in my duty to my mother, use the severest, said Laura.

The monk then reminded her, that her mother had always entertained a favourable opinion of Signor Zeluco, which had been confirmed and augmented by time and more intimate acquaintance; that she had heard his proposal of marriage with great satisfaction; for few things are more agreeable to a prudent and affectionate mother, than to see her daughter united in marriage with a man deserving her esteem: that on finding her daughter's ideas different from hers on this subject, she had sacrificed her own, and, with a generosity which few parents possess, had never again given her a hint on the subject; but it was even then pretty evident the sacrifice had cost her a good deal: that Zeluco's gallant behaviour since that time, and the very important service he had rendered her, had renewed and sharpened her mother's original wishes, that so deserving a man were as agreeable to her daughter as to herself, and probably had inspired her with fresh hopes that his conduct would produce that effect on such a generous and grateful heart as Laura's: that being disappointed in these flattering expectations at a moment when her own private affairs were so much deranged, had, he feared, corroded the breast of Madame de Seidlits, and was the true cause of all her inquietude; for she was endued with that noble and exalted affection which inclined her to be ready to communicate to her daughter the largest portion of all her comforts, and endeavour to keep to herself the whole of what was painful in their common lot, as appeared conspicuous in her concealing from Laura the bankruptcy which so cruelly affected their circumstances, and allowing the whole vexation of that unexpected misfortune to prey upon her own spirits, and undermine her health.

Here the father paused, to give Laura an opportu-

nity of speaking: but perceiving that she kept her eyes fixed on the ground, and seemed unable to make any reply, he added, That, upon the whole, it was very difficult for him to offer any advice, or point out a remedy; because he acknowledged that Laura's taste, even her prejudices, ought to have weight in the choice of a husband, and that it would be hard to blame her for indulging them. He would not venture to assert that religion required her to sacrifice them, as Providence certainly might, if it thought proper, find other means of preserving the health of her mother; and might, in its own good time, free that worthy woman from her present difficulties, and prevent her future life from being embittered with penury, which her elegant taste and liberal disposition could so ill endure.

Father, said Laura, whose eyes were now overflowing, I am unable at present to converse with you,—leave me to myself,—I will, if I can, talk with you more fully to-morrow morning.—They parted.

CHAPTER LIV.

“ Fallit te incautam pietas tua.—” VIRG.

LAURA continued reflecting on every thing that the monk had said and insinuated—Zeluco's disinterested passion—his kindness to her mother—the obligation he had laid on herself—her mother's wishes, at first so plainly signified, and afterwards with such delicacy suppressed—her maternal tenderness through all her life, particularly displayed by her endeavour to conceal the affair of the jewels and the bankruptcy—and, finally, the declining state of her mother's health, which filled her with the most alarming apprehensions.

In consequence of revolving those considerations in her mind, her dislike to Zeluco began to appear in her own eyes an unreasonable prejudice, which gratitude and filial affection with united voice called upon her to overcome.

The next day Laura informed her mother, that she was willing to bestow her hand on Signor Zeluco. Joy was very strongly mixed with the surprise which appeared in Madame de Seidlits's countenance. Yet she addressed Laura in these terms:—I desire, my dear, that no sacrifice may be made to any supposed wish of mine on this occasion; I assured you formerly, and I repeat it now, that I think you have a full right in an affair of this nature to follow your own inclinations.

Laura replied, That this alteration of sentiment had taken place in consequence of her serious reflections on Signor Zeluco's conduct to them both.

Madame de Seidlits then embracing her daughter, expressed her satisfaction in the most affectionate terms; and communicated the glad tidings to Father Pedro, who was then entering, and immediately joined in Madame de Seidlits's congratulations.

Laura, however, said, That as she had in a very serious and formal manner refused Zeluco when he last made his court to her, it was very possible he might since that time have altered his sentiments as well as herself.

That, I can answer for, is not the case, said Father Pedro.

There is no need of any one's answering for it, said Madame de Seidlits; the truth will appear of itself. If Signor Zeluco does not show as much ardour as ever to obtain my daughter's hand, he never shall obtain it with my consent.

Laura, smiling, thanked her mother for being so punctilious where she was concerned; and said, she would explain herself in a letter to Signor Zeluco, which she hoped the father would deliver to him.

Madame de Seidlits objected to her writing. The father, she said, might, if he pleased, acquaint Signor Zeluco, that her daughter was more favourably disposed towards him than formerly, and then leave him to take his course.

Laura said, If her mother would trust to her expressing herself with propriety on a subject of so much delicacy, she would prefer writing, as there was one point that required explanation.

I have perfect confidence in your prudence, my dear, said Madame de Seidlits; write what you think proper. She then left Laura and Father Pedro together.

Laura directly wrote what follows :

“ Signor Zeluco,

“ IN the conversation I lately had with you, I candidly told you my sentiments; with the same sincerity I now inform you they are altered; and that I am ready to accept of your proposal. It will not surprise me if such apparent levity should induce you to renounce the too favourable opinion which you had of me; should that be the case, you certainly can have no scruple in declaring it.

“ It is proper that I should further inform you, that since I last saw you, I have learnt that, by the failure of a house at Berlin, great part of the money left by my father for the use of my mother, and which would have eventually come to me, is, in all probability, irrecoverably lost.

“ LAURA SEIDLITS.”

Having sealed this letter, she gave it to Father Pedro, who carried it directly to Zeluco, whom he found alone in his garden, ruminating a half-digested plan of a very atrocious nature, the object of which was the possession of Laura.

The monk announced by his countenance that he brought agreeable news, and delivered to him Laura's letter; which, in spite of the cold terms in which it was conceived, as it pointed a more speedy and safe road to the gratification of his desires, filled him with pleasure, and entirely dissipated the dark and desperate purposes over which his mind was brooding.

He told Father Pedro, that he would himself be the bearer of the answer to the letter; and immediately waited on Madame de Seidlits and Laura with all the expressions of joy usual on similar occasions.

From this moment there was a visible change for the better in the spirits and health of Madame de Seidlits: she was now convinced that her daughter had overcome her groundless dislike of Zeluco; was secured in a comfortable and genteel situation for life; of course nine-tenths of her anxiety were removed. Laura was rejoiced at the favourable alteration in her mother, reflected with satisfaction on the efforts she herself had made for the sake of a parent whom she tenderly loved, and flattered herself that an union agreed to on her part from such a pious motive, would be more fortunate than could naturally have been expected, considering the extreme indifference, to call it by no stronger name, which she felt for her intended husband.

Zeluco soon became urgent with Madame de Seidlits that an early day might be fixed on for the marriage ceremony; saying, that he would in the mean time order the settlements to be made according to the terms formerly proposed.

She expressed a desire that the ceremony might be postponed at least till the return of Signora Sporzá from Rome. One reason of Zeluco's impatience was, that it might be over before her return; dreading a delay, or perhaps a total prevention, from that quarter; but, without giving any hint of such fears, he earnestly

insisted on the ceremony's taking place immediately after the settlements were ready ; urging that Signora Sporza would be most agreeably surprised to find that all was over at her return ; and that it would give him double pleasure to salute her on their first meeting, not as a person intended to be, but who actually was, his relation. Madame de Seidlits agreed to leave it to Laura's decision, promising, at Zeluco's request, not to write to Signora Sporza till the point should be determined.

He knew that Laura wished the ceremony should be private ; he directed Father Pedro to hint to her that this would be impossible after Signora Sporza's return, whose decided taste for parade and ostentation they all knew.

Laura was more easily brought to agree to an early day than was expected : having already given her consent, despising all affected delays, and wishing to have every thing conducted with as much privacy as the nature of the case would admit, she decided for the earliest day that had been mentioned. Besides the motives already mentioned, there was another which influenced this unfortunate young lady more than all the rest ; she felt her original reluctance to any connexion with Zeluco threatening to return ; and she wished the ceremony over, that it might be no longer in her own power to shrink from what she now thought both her duty and honour required her to perform.

The writings were prepared, and an early day appointed for the private performance of the marriage ceremony.

During this interval, the heart of Laura, endowed with the most exquisite sensibility, and formed for the purest and most delicate sensations of love, was not agitated with those tender fears and pleasing emotions which fill the virgin's bosom at her approaching union with the beloved object of her wishes ; she, unhappy

maiden! felt an hourly increasing aversion to the man to whom she was destined to plight her faith, which all the struggles of her reason could not subdue. Her resolution however enabled her, in a great measure, to conceal what her reason could not conquer, and her efforts for this purpose rendered the pangs of her heart the more acute.

The night preceding the day of her marriage she was disturbed with gloomy forebodings, distracted with horrid dreams, and with terrors of a confused nature, which darted like lightning in a black and stormy night across her clouded imagination.

She arose early, endeavoured to banish those dismal apprehensions from her breast, and assumed as much serenity as she possibly could at the approach of her mother, who imputed the marks of disturbance that still remained in the countenance of Laura to no uncommon cause: yet all the endearments of maternal affection which Madame de Seidlits lavished on her daughter, were scarcely able to keep up her spirits: two or three times the trembling heart of Laura was ready to break through all restraint, avow her sad forebodings, and beg that this frightful marriage might be postponed for ever. She was prevented by the satisfaction she perceived it gave her mother, and by the thoughts of the light in which such fickle and childish conduct must put her in the opinion of others.

The marriage ceremony was performed privately, and Zeluco remained that night at the house of Madame de Seidlits.

CHAPTER LV.

“ All classic learning lose on classic ground.” POPE.

A DAY or two before Laura's marriage took place at Naples, Signora Sporza received a letter from Germany, giving her an account of the severe loss which Madame de Seidlits would sustain by the bankruptcy. This letter, directed to her at Naples, had gone in course of post to that city, was there detained for some days by the neglect of her servant, and now conveyed to her the first account she had ever had of an event which gave her very great pain. She well knew the limited boundaries of Madame de Seidlits's finances ; that the money which she depended on for paying some pressing debts at Naples was in this banker's hands, and of course that she would be put to immediate and very great distress by this unlucky accident : she became even afraid, lest, terrified by a species of calamity which she had never experienced, Madame de Seidlits should become more urgent than ever with Laura to give her hand to Zeluco, and lest Laura, in compliance with her mother's desire, might at last consent : but what made her more uneasy than all the rest, was her not having it in her power, from any fund of her own, sufficiently to relieve the distress of her friends.

In this situation she could think of nobody so able, and whom she expected to find so willing, to supply her in what she wanted, as the honourable Mr. N—. She sent a message, desiring that he would come and speak with her as soon as possible. Mr. N— was not at home. She sent again, begging that he would come to her the moment he arrived.

But her impatience increasing as the time of the departure of the post for Naples drew near, she drove to

Mr. N—'s lodging; and calling for Buchanan, told him she had business of importance with his master, and would wait for him till he came home. Buchanan showed her into a room adjoining to Mr. Steele's dressing-room, and separated from it by a very crazy partition. Steele was there with Mr. Squander and some other young Englishmen. Signora Sporza hearing their voices, thought she distinguished that of Mr. N—. No, said Buchanan, it is a party of young gentlemen, who are taking a course of Roman antiquities; they wait at present for the antiquarian who instructs them; but it is my opinion, if the poor man profit no more by *them*, than they do by his lectures, he will soon be in a state of perfect starvation.

A voice was then heard, crying, Hey, Duchess, what the devil are you about, you slut?—ay, to her, Pincher! pull away!—tear it from her, boy!

Who does he talk to? said Signora Sporza.

A couple of quadrupeds, madam, replied Buchanan; the one is a spaniel, the other a terrier. Those young gentlemen cannot proceed in their studies without them.

Here the door of Mr. Steele's room was opened by a servant, who said the antiquarian had sent to know whether they were inclined to go to the Pantheon that day, or to St. Peter's?

Damn the Pantheon and St. Peter's both, cried Squander; tell him we can go to neither at present.—Zounds! cannot the fellow quietly pocket his money without *boring* us any more with his temples, and churches, and pictures, and statues?

Steele, however, finding them determined against attending the antiquarian, followed the servant, and delivered a more civil message.

While he was absent, Squander, tossing a couple of maps on the floor, cried, Here, Duchess, here is

Roma Moderna;—and there, Pincher—there is *Roma Antiqua* for you, boy—tear away.

When Steele returned, he endeavoured to save Rome from the ravages of those Goths; but Squander told him with a loud laugh, that Duchess had made a violent rent in Saint Peter's, and Pincher had torn the Pantheon to pieces.

Squander then proposed that they should walk to the stable, to examine a mare which he had thoughts of purchasing.—Duchess and Pincher followed them, and Mr. N— came home soon after.

I have an unexpected call for money, said Signora Sporza, interrupting his apologies for having made her wait: I hope you can let me have it.

I hope I can, said Mr. N—. How much do you need?

Three or four hundred ounces, replied she.

I am happy that I can, without inconveniency, spare you four hundred, replied he.

I do not think it probable that you will be soon repaid, said she.

I shall not need it, replied Mr. N—.

You are an angel of a man, cried she; give me then an order on my banker at Naples for that sum, for I must send it thither by this day's post.

Mr. N— directly gave her the order.

O my good friend! cried she, I must not tell you how I come to need this money; but, indeed, it would grieve you if you knew who—. Here Signora Sporza's voice was suppressed with grief at the idea of the distress of her two friends, and the tears fell down her cheeks: after a pause, she gave her hand to Mr. N—, who led her to her carriage, without either of them uttering another word.

As soon as Signora Sporza got home, she wrote a most affectionate letter to Madame de Seidlitz, com-

plaining of her having concealed the misfortune of the bankruptcy at Berlin, and the distress in which this accident must necessarily have involved her and Laura ; and informing her, that she herself had unexpectedly recovered some money for which she had no immediate use ; she begged therefore very earnestly, that Madame de Seidlits would accept of five hundred ounces, which she could without any inconveniency let her have directly. Signora Sporza added one hundred ounces, all in her power, to the four hundred advanced by Mr. N—.

Madame de Seidlits was with her daughter when she received this letter, which she immediately showed to Laura. They were both much affected with this instance of friendship, and agreed that it would have an air of unkindness not immediately to acquaint Signora Sporza with Laura's marriage, by which she would understand that her liberality was unnecessary.

Zeluco not having now the same objection that he had formerly, assented without difficulty to their proposal ; and by the next post Signora Sporza received the account of Laura's marriage with equal surprise and concern.

The following day she informed Mr. N— that she should always consider herself under as great an obligation to him as if she had made use of his credit, but that she now found she should have no occasion for it, and desired him to instruct his banker at Naples to that effect.

At the interval of several hours she informed him of Laura's marriage with Zeluco. Good heavens, exclaimed he, is it possible !

What do you see extraordinary, said she, in a very accomplished woman of no fortune marrying a very rich man—

Of no accomplishments ? said Mr. N—.

Even if that be the case, it certainly is nothing ex-

traordinary, said Signora Sporza.—If it is not to be wondered at, I fear it is to be regretted, added Mr. N—.

After this, Signora Sporza seemed desirous to change the subject. She would have had no scruple in acquainting Mr. N— with any thing which regarded herself alone, but thought she had no right to inform him of the state of Madame de Seidlitz's circumstances, and of course impressing him with the idea that this had driven Laura to the marriage. Signora Sporza was also much afraid that Laura, in avoiding one species of distress, had exposed herself to others, which to one of her turn of mind might prove fully as acute; and therefore she did not like to talk on the subject. Mr. N—, seeing her thoughtful and rather reserved, left her, he himself having been somewhat shocked as well as surprised at hearing of Laura's marriage.

Whatever uneasiness that event occasioned to Signora Sporza and Mr. N—, it was heard of with much satisfaction by his valet Buchanan, who lost no time in communicating the news to the baronet, who also heard of it with pleasure: for although he did not think there was so much danger as Buchanan did, of Mr. N—'s making proposals of marriage to Laura immediately, yet he plainly perceived that he had a very high regard for that lady, and he particularly remarked, that his nephew did not at all relish a proposal which had been made by way of sounding him, that he should accompany his uncle to England, without returning to Naples: in short, he thought, that although Mr. N— might be sensible of the inconveniences of uniting himself to a woman of Laura's religion and country, yet these inconveniences would naturally dwindle in his estimation, in proportion as his admiration of the lady increased. He therefore could not help being pleased with the account of Laura's marriage.

The baronet observed that Mr. N— was by no means in his usual spirits after this intelligence: he therefore omitted nothing that he imagined could tend

to the amusement of his young friend ; and frequently proposed excursions to Tivoli, Frascati, and other places in the neighbourhood of Rome.

Mr. Steele was generally of these parties : but one day, when the knight and Mr. N— had agreed to dine at Albano, Mr. Steele was prevailed on to stay and make one at a cricket match with some British gentlemen and their footmen, who were at that time at Rome.

After dinner, the baronet asked Mr. N—, how he liked the new acquaintance whom his father and aunt had recommended to him, meaning Mr. Steele.

It is impossible not to like him, replied N—, for he is one of the best-natured easy-tempered fellows alive, and at the same time of the greatest integrity. When he first arrived at Naples, he seemed thoughtful and rather melancholy. This, however, being no part of his natural disposition, soon wore away, and now the genuine cheerful and obliging colour of his character is almost always predominant.

Does he intend to remain long in Italy? said the baronet.

I believe he will remain as long as I do, replied N—, and no longer ; for he does me the honour of being more attached to me than to Italy ; and I for my part have the most perfect good-will to him, although he is not precisely the kind of man whom I should have expected my father to recommend to my particular acquaintance ; yet I shall ever think myself obliged to him for it. I do not so much as know of what family he is, continued Mr. N—, nor by what means he got acquainted with ours, for Steele is not spontaneously communicative ; and you know, sir, I am not a great asker of questions.

I can give you some account of those matters, said the baronet ; for I have frequently heard your father describe his first interview with this young man's uncle.

But as we know more of Mr. Steele's family than the baronet did, we shall in the next chapter give the reader a more circumstantial account than was in his power.

CHAPTER LVI.

Anecdotes concerning Mr. Nathaniel Transfer.

MR. Nathaniel Transfer, uncle to the young man now in question, had made a large fortune in the city of London, where he was born, and where he lived happily till the age of sixty-five. Mr. Transfer's life may surely be called happy, since it afforded him the only enjoyments which he was capable of relishing: he had the pleasure of finding his fortune increasing every year; he had a remarkably good appetite, relished a bottle of old port, and slept very soundly all night, particularly after a bottle of Burton ale. He might have continued some years longer in the same state of felicity, and perhaps have been conveyed to the other world in a gentle lethargy, without sickness, like a passenger who sleeps the whole way from Dover to Calais, had it not been for the importunities of a set of people who called themselves his friends: these officious persons were continually disturbing his tranquillity with such speeches as the following: "Why should you, Mr. Transfer, continue to live all your life in the city, and follow the drudgery of business like a poor man who has his fortune to make? It is surely time for you to begin and enjoy a little ease and pleasure after so much toil and labour. What benefit will accrue to you from your great fortune, if you are determined never to enjoy it? Good God, Mr. Transfer, do you intend to slave for ever?—You certainly have already more money than you have any use for."

This last assertion was unquestionably true, although the inference those reasoners drew from it was false. The fourth part of his fortune was a great deal more than Transfer had any use for; gathering of pebbles, or accumulating pounds, would have been equally beneficial to him, if he could have taken an equal interest in the one occupation as in the other, and if he could have contemplated the one heap with equal satisfaction with the other. He had not the shadow of a wish to spend more than he did, nor the least desire of benefiting any of the human race by the fruits of his labour. But Mr. Transfer's advisers had forgot the power of habit upon the mind of man. Transfer, like thousands of others, had begun to accumulate money as the means of enjoying pleasure at some future time; and continued the practice so long, that the means became the end—the mere habit of accumulating, and the routine of business, secured him from tedium, and became the greatest enjoyment of which he was susceptible. Not being aware of this himself, poor Transfer at last yielded to his friends' importunity.—“ Well, I am determined to be a slave no longer; it does not signify talking,” says he, “ I will begin and *enjoy* without any more loss of time.”

He wound up his affairs with all possible expedition, gave up all connexions in business at once, bought an estate in the country, with a very convenient house in good repair upon it, to which he went soon after, determining to rest from his labours, and to take his fill of pleasure. But he quickly found rest the most laborious thing that he had ever experienced, and that to have nothing to do was the most fatiguing business on earth. In the course of business, his occupations followed each other at stated times, and in regular succession; the hours passed imperceptibly without seeming tedious, or requiring any effort on his part to make them move faster. But now he felt them to

move heavily and sluggishly, and while he yawned along his serpentine walks and fringed parterres, he thought the day would never have an end.

His house was at too great a distance from London for his city friends to go down on a Saturday and return to town on Monday. His neighbours in the country were ignorant of that circle of ideas which had rolled in his brain with little variation for the last forty years of his life ; and he was equally unacquainted with the objects of their contemplations : unless it was their mutual love of Port wine and Burton ale, they had hardly a sentiment in common with Mr. Transfer, who was left for many a tedious hour, particularly before dinner, to enjoy rural felicity by himself, or with no other company than a few gods and goddesses which he had bought in Piccadilly, and placed in his garden. They talk, said he to himself, of the pleasures of the country, but would to God I had never been persuaded to leave the labours of the city for such woeful pleasures !—O Lombard-street ! Lombard-street ! in evil hour did I forsake thee for verdant walks and flowery landscapes, and that there tiresome piece of made water. What walk is so agreeable as a walk through the streets of London ? what landscape more flowery than those in the print-shops ? and what water was ever made by man equal to the Thames ? If here I venture to walk but a short way beyond my own fields, I may be wet through by a sudden shower, and exposed to the wind of every quarter, before I get under shelter ; but in walking through the streets of London, if it rains, a man can shelter himself under the piazzas ; if the wind is in his face while he walks along one street, he may turn into another ; if he is hungry, he can be refreshed at the pastry shops ; if tired, he can call a hackney coach ; and he is sure of meeting with entertaining company every evening at the club.

Such were Mr. Transfer's daily reflections; and he was often tempted to abandon the country for ever, to return to Lombard-street, and reassume his old occupations.

It is probable that he would have yielded to the temptation, had it not been for an acquaintance which he accidentally formed with the Earl of —.

This nobleman, who was very subject to the gout, lived almost constantly in the country. What contributed with his bad health to give him a dislike to the town, was his fixed disapprobation of the public measures at that time carried on, and his indignation at the conduct of his eldest son, who had accepted of a place at court, and voted with administration.

The earl resided therefore ten months in the year at a very noble mansion in the middle of his estate, and at no great distance from the house which Transfer had lately purchased. After the death of the countess, his sister, Lady Elizabeth, a maiden lady of an excellent character, always presided at his table, with whom Miss Warren, the daughter of a navy officer who had lost his life in the service, resided as a friend and companion.

The earl had often heard of a rich citizen who had bought an estate in his neighbourhood, and the whole country resounded with the style in which he had ornamented his garden, and the peculiar charms of a little snug rotunda which he had just finished on the verge of his ground, and which impended the great London road.

As Mr. Transfer sat one day in this gay fabric, smoking his pipe, and enjoying the dust, the earl passed in his carriage, which, without having observed Mr. Transfer, he ordered to stop, that he might survey the new erection at leisure. The citizen directly popped his head out at the window, and politely invited his lordship to enter, and he would show him not only

that room, but also the other improvements he had made in his gardens.

My lord accepted the invitation, and was conducted by Mr. Transfer over all this scene of taste. The marks of astonishment which the former displayed at almost every thing he beheld, afforded great satisfaction to Mr. Transfer; the turn of whose conversation, and the singular observations he made, equally delighted his lordship.

Pray, Mr. Transfer, said he, pointing to one of the statues which stood at the end of the walk, what figure is that?

That, my lord, answered Transfer, that there statue I take to be—let me recollect—yes, I take that to be either Venus or Vulcan, but upon my word I cannot exactly tell which.—Here, you, James,—calling to the gardener,—is this Venus or Vulcan?

That is Wenus, answered the man; Wulcan is lame of a leg, and stands upon one foot in the next alley.

Yes, yes; this is Venus sure enough, said Transfer; though I was not quite certain at first.

Perhaps it is not an easy matter to distinguish them? said the earl.

Why, they are both made of the same metal, my lord, said Transfer.

She ought to be bone of his bone, and flesh of his flesh, resumed the earl, for you know Venus was Vulcan's wife, Mr. Transfer.

I am bound to believe she was, replied Transfer, since your lordship says so.

You have so many of these Gods, Mr. Transfer, said the earl, that it is difficult to be master of all their private histories.

It is so, my lord, said Transfer; I was a good while of learning their names,—but I know them all pretty well now.—That there man, in the highland garb, is

Mars. And the name of the old fellow with the pitchfork is Neptune.

You are now very perfect indeed, Mr. Transfer, said the earl.

At his departure, my lord invited Mr. Transfer to dine with him the following day, introduced him to his sister, and was so entertained with his conversation and manners, that he visited him frequently, and often invited him to N—house where an apartment was kept for him, to which he was made welcome as often as he found himself tired of his own home, which, to the earl's great satisfaction, was pretty frequently.

Yet even at N—house Mr. Transfer sometimes had occasion to regret Lombard-street, particularly in the forenoons, and when the weather was bad.

One day, immediately after breakfast, when there was no company but Mr. Transfer,—It rains so furiously, said the earl, that there is no driving out.—How shall we amuse ourselves, Mr. Transfer?

Why, I should think smoking a pipe or two the pleasantest way of passing the time in such raw moist weather, said Transfer.

Yes; that might do pretty well for you and me, said the earl; but, as far as I recollect, neither my sister nor this young lady ever smoke.

If that is the case, replied Transfer, we must think of something else more to their taste, for I scorn not to be agreeable to the ladies.

Have you got any thing new to read to us, sister? said the peer.

That might do for you and me, brother, said she; but perhaps Mr. Transfer never reads.

Forgive me, madam, said Transfer, I have no particular aversion to it. I have sometimes read for half an hour at a stretch since I have been settled in the country, and I believe I could hold out longer, if I were not so apt to fall asleep.

Some time after this, Lady Elizabeth expressed her surprise to Mr. Transfer, that, as he was a bachelor, he did not think of having some of his female relations to take care of his family, rather than a mercenary house-keeper.

To this Mr. Transfer replied, that he had been put very early to business, and not being accustomed to his relations, he had never cared much for any of them, except his sister, who had lived with him several years in Lombard-street; and as he was then *accustomed to her*, he had a good deal of kindness for her, but that she had made an ungrateful return for all his kindness.

I am sorry for that, said Lady Elizabeth; but I hope your sister did nothing very bad.

Yes, but she did, resumed Transfer; for she actually married, without my approbation, a young man of the name of Steele, with little fortune, and no experience in business; although she knew that I had a very *warm* man of established credit in my eye for her, provided she would only have had a little patience.

Provided she had liked the man you had in your eye, and provided he had liked her, you mean, Mr. Transfer? said Lady Elizabeth.

I beg your ladyship's forgiveness, said Transfer; still she would have stood in need of a little patience.

Could not they have married when they pleased, if they were both willing, and you desirous of the match? added she.

I was most desirous of the match, replied Transfer; but still there was an obstacle.

What obstacle? said she.

The man I had in my eye for my sister had a wife then alive, answered Transfer.

I confess that *was* an obstacle! cried Lady Elizabeth.

But she was dying of a consumption, added Transfer, and I had reason to believe that he would propose marriage to my sister very soon after his wife's death.

Did his wife die as he expected? said Lady Elizabeth.

Yes; that she did, said Transfer: but she might as well have lived, for my sister had married the other three weeks before.

That was unlucky indeed. But what became of your sister and her husband?

I never saw my sister from the time of her marriage, said Transfer, till after her husband became a bankrupt; for he broke within a very few years.

Poor man! cried Lady Elizabeth; but you saw your sister after her misfortune?

Yes; I could not help it, said Transfer, for she burst in upon me, begging that I would engage my credit for reestablishing her husband.

Which I hope you did? said Lady Elizabeth.

As I had refused to have any connexion with him, even when he was in some credit, your ladyship can hardly suppose that I would begin one after he was quite broken, said Transfer.

As Lady Elizabeth was a little shocked at this observation, she made no reply. It was not in her power to say any thing obliging on this occasion, and it was not in her nature to say any thing harsh:—she only was silent. Which the earl, who was present, observing, To be sure, Mr. Transfer, said he, that is not to be supposed.

But yet, resumed Transfer, as she was my sister, I told her that if she would give up all connexion with her husband, I was willing to receive her again into my house, and put her child out to nurse at my own expense.

That was very fair on your part, said the earl. Well, what reply did your sister make to this?

Why, she absolutely refused, my lord; which is a pretty clear proof, continued Mr. Transfer, of her loving her husband, though he was a bankrupt, better than

her own brother, of whom there was not the least suspicion to his discredit; for which reason I turned her away, refusing positively to do any thing for her husband.

Well, what became of them? said the peer.

I heard afterwards that they were reduced to great distress.—But what are bankrupts to expect? continued Transfer. And as for my sister, she was not to be pitied, because she might have lived perfectly easy both in body and mind in my house in Lombard-street, if she had taken my advice, and abandoned her husband, and sent her child to nurse, or to board in the country.

Nothing can be more clear, said the earl, than that you have acted like yourself, and have done every thing for your sister that could be expected of you.—But, after all, what became of her?

A relation of her husband's happened to die, and left him a small estate in Yorkshire, of five or six hundred a-year; and as neither he nor my sister had any *ambition*, and were afraid of a new bankruptcy if they had settled in town, he retired to his small estate, where he died a few years ago, leaving no other children but the son whom she refused to send out to nurse, and who has now arrived at man's estate.

Whereas, added the earl, if she had followed your advice, and given him out to nurse, she might probably have had him off her hands long ago.

Why, there is no knowing what might have happened, said Transfer; for most of those children die before they arrive at the years of discretion; which is very well ordered, as they have nothing to live on.

Well, but, Mr. Transfer, resumed the peer, do you ever intend to marry?

No, my lord, replied he; I cannot say I do:—as I never was *accustomed to a wife*, I am not much inclined to matrimony; for through the whole course of

my life I have never found any thing agree with me, but what I am accustomed to.

That is very wisely observed, said the earl; but this young man of course will be your heir?

Unquestionably, answered Transfer; the young man never offended me; and as he is my nearest of kin, I should be sorry to do an unjust thing, and leave my fortune to any other body.—No, no; he shall have all at my death, but he must wait till then: besides, it is so far lucky that it saves my making a will, to which I have always had an aversion; for, this young man being my lawful heir, there is no need to employ an attorney to leave him his due.

CHAPTER LVII.

Reasons for going into holy orders.

“Gaudet equis, canibusque.”

HOR.

THE strange apathy which Transfer discovered, and which shocked Lady Elizabeth, seemed to be a source of amusement to her brother; who, however, was surprised at perceiving that Transfer expressed not the least desire of ever seeing an only sister, and still more that he should have the same indifference towards a nephew whom he considered as his heir, and who he owned had never offended him. The insensibility of Transfer for his sister and nephew seemed to inspire the earl with an interest in them. He wrote to an acquaintance who resided in that part of the country in which Mrs. Steele and her son lived, desiring an account of both their characters, and a particular detail regarding their circumstances and manner of life, especially what the views of the son were.

In consequence of this, the earl was informed, that Mrs. Steele was an agreeable woman, of a cheerful

temper and benevolent disposition, without much foresight, and distractedly fond of her son, whom she had never been able to contradict in her life : that he was a young fellow of that genuine and rare good-nature that resists the usual effect of so much indulgence ; for although his mother's study was to gratify, not to correct, his humours, this ill-judged partiality had only prevented his improvement, without rendering him capricious, unfeeling, or wicked : that while he remained at school, he had applied himself to nothing ; but that ever since he left it, he had applied himself with unremitting diligence to hunting and shooting, in both of which, and in the knowledge of horses and dogs, he had made great proficiency for his age ; that he was made welcome wherever he went, and was a great favourite with man, woman, and child, all over the country : and that a noble lord, of very great influence, who was particularly fond of him, had lately told young Steele, that he would be very happy to have it in his power to be of service to him ; adding, that if he chose to go into the army, he would immediately procure him a cornetcy of dragoons, and would do all in his power to assist his promotion afterwards.

Steele, after expressing his gratitude for so much goodness, declined the proposal, saying, he was quite unfit for the army.

The nobleman was the more surprised at this, as he had a notion that the army was the profession, of all others, for which Mr. Steele was fittest, being genteel in his person, of a bold intrepid disposition, and capable of bearing the greatest bodily fatigue.

You may, perhaps, have no inclination for the service, said his lordship—But—

Nay, my lord, resumed Mr. Steele, if there were any likelihood of a war, I should prefer it to any other line of life ; because in the time of war a soldier is

continually occupied, and can have no wish but doing his duty—but then what a sad business must it be in the time of peace!

During a successful war, said my lord, a soldier will naturally be in high spirits; but I do not perceive why he should be peculiarly sad in the time of peace.

I certainly should, my lord, said Steele; your lordship knows my excessive fondness for shooting, and the chase;—to be obliged to attend my regiment during those seasons would render me quite miserable.

Why, the same objection, said his lordship, may be made to law, physic, and almost every other profession.

It may so, replied Steele.

Then you wish to be of no profession? said the peer.

Forgive me, my lord, said the other, I am sensible that my circumstances are so narrow, that I cannot hope to indulge my taste for my favourite amusements in the style I could wish, without being assisted by the emoluments of some profession.

What profession then would you choose to be of? rejoined his lordship.

That of a clergyman, replied Mr. Steele.

A clergyman! exclaimed the peer.

Yes, my lord, continued Steele; I confess I have a great desire to enter into holy orders.

I cannot conceive, said the peer, what can be your inducement.

My fondness for hunting and shooting, answered Steele; and if, by your lordship's favour, I could obtain a tolerable living in a hunting county, I should think myself extremely happy. The business of a clergyman, as your lordship knows, from many examples, is no way incompatible with a passion for

those manly amusements, without which I am sure life would seem a very dull affair in my eyes.

But there are certain duties of a clergyman, said the peer, which, in some people's eyes, are not exceedingly entertaining.

I should think them no great hardships, my lord, said Steele : in case of the indisposition of my curate, on particular occasions, I have no manner of objection to reading prayers, or to preaching ; and on the whole I do not despair of rendering myself agreeable to the generality of my flock ; for, with regard to comforting the sick and relieving the poor, I thank heaven I am disposed to perform those duties whether I should ever be a clergyman or not.

All this is very well, resumed the peer ; but, my dear Steele, are not there some previous studies necessary before you can be—

Certainly, replied the other, interrupting his lordship ; and I have of late been preparing myself accordingly. I confess I was too inattentive at school, which renders this task the harder upon me now ; yet I hope to surmount all obstacles, and give satisfaction to the bishop. My passion for hunting and shooting instigates me to exertions in study which I never knew before.

Nay, Heaven forefend, replied the peer, smiling, that I should attempt to blunt such laudable instigations ! All I have to say is, that when you are once fairly ordained, I beg you will let me know : there is some considerable chance of a living, which is in my gift, being vacant very soon ; and you may rely upon it, my dear Steele, that if you continue in your present way of thinking, and are completely dubbed, that I will prefer no man to yourself.

CHAPTER LVIII.

“ Ille bonis faveatque, et concilietur amicis.” HOR.

THIS account of Mrs. Steele and her son did not diminish the inclination the earl had to serve them, in which he was assisted by Lady Elizabeth. They found no difficulty in prevailing on Mr. Transfer to give Steele an invitation to visit him, with which the young man immediately complied. His appearance, natural complaisance, and everlasting good-humour, rendered him highly agreeable to all the family at N—— House, without excepting Miss Warren, the young lady who lived with Lady Elizabeth. Here it will not be improper to mention by what accident this young lady came to be introduced into the family of the Earl of ——.

Lady Elizabeth happened to pass through the county town at a time when the inhabitants, by ringing of bells, bonfires, and illuminations, were announcing their joy for a victory obtained by a celebrated naval commander. She stopped her carriage at the door of an old female acquaintance, intending merely to leave a message; but understanding that she was a little indisposed, Lady Elizabeth went to see her. As she entered the chamber, a beautiful girl of about thirteen or fourteen years of age, with severe marks of sorrow, went out. After Lady Elizabeth had satisfied herself that her friend's indisposition was but slight, and that she was in a way of recovery, she inquired who that lovely girl was who had just left the room, and why she seemed so much afflicted.

Alas, poor girl, replied the other, she has received the account of her father's being killed in the very action for which the citizens are displaying all those marks of joy. Unfortunate girl, continued she, by her father's

death she is not only deprived of her only surviving parent, but perhaps the very means of subsistence ; for there is great reason to fear that her father, who was a very generous as well as a brave man, has left more debts than effects.

Poor young creature, said Lady Elizabeth, how much is she to be pitied !—how came you acquainted with her ?

I am a distant relation of her mother's, replied Lady Elizabeth's friend : on hearing of her father's death, I invited her to my house, that I might soothe her affliction, and prevent her being shocked at seeing her young companions, unmindful of her particular calamity, take part in the general joy.

The humane and benevolent heart of Lady Elizabeth was strongly affected at this recital ; she continued for some time in silent contemplation on the hard lot of this unhappy orphan, whose tender bosom was wounded by one of the sharpest arrows in the whole quiver of adversity, at a time when the hearts of all around her were elated with joy.

She desired that the young lady might be introduced to her ; she spoke to her the soothing language of sympathy ; and was charmed with her appearance, her conversation, and the whole of her behaviour.

Lady Elizabeth afterwards made an application to this young lady's nearest relations, proposing to take on herself the charge of her maintenance and education, to which they agreed with the most ready acquiescence. She carried her to N—— House : the earl, who had known Miss Warren's father a little, and had a high esteem for his character, was delighted with what his sister proposed, and Miss Warren gained daily upon the affections of both, and was now the confidential friend and inseparable companion of her patroness.

We now return to Mr. Transfer, who became in a short time *accustomed* to his nephew, and at length so fond of him, that he could hardly bear his absence for a few hours.

Not all the interest which Steele had in pleasing Mr. Transfer, however, nor even the more powerful attractions of Miss Warren, could prevail on this young man to remain at his uncle's house, after he received a letter from his mother, written in rather low spirits, and expressing a desire to see him.

He assured his uncle, in spite of his solicitations to the contrary, that he would set out for Yorkshire the very next morning. Transfer complained of this to the earl, saying, it was strange perverseness in the young man to prefer his mother's company, who could do nothing for him, to his, who intended to do so much.

The general run of people would certainly act otherwise, replied the earl; but why cannot Mr. Steele have the pleasure both of your company and his mother's? for although she ought not to be put on an equal footing with a man of your *great wealth*, Mr. Transfer, yet the affection the young man shows to his mother is no way unnatural neither.

I do not assert that it is, said Transfer, but what would your lordship have me to do? for I do not love to part with this youth, after having become *accustomed to him*; and perhaps his mother may not allow him to return so soon as I could wish.

Invite his mother to come with him, replied the earl, and then he'll stay as long as you please.

This was an expedient which had never entered into Transfer's mind; but he agreed to it the moment it was proposed. He wrote to his sister to detain her son as short a time as possible, and begged of her to accompany him to his house. Lady Elizabeth wrote also to Mrs. Steele, expressing a desire to be ac-

quainted with her, and urging her to forget old misunderstandings; and accept without delay of her brother's invitation:

Mrs. Steele came accordingly with her son, and was received by her brother with some appearance of kindness, while to her son he displayed as much as was in his nature. The following day she was visited by the family at N—— House; was invited there, and treated in the most obliging manner: she had not resided a couple of months with Mr. Transfer, till he entirely forgot Lombard-street, and felt less desire of forsaking his own mansion for that of the earl; and at last, being again accustomed to his sister, and she bestowing more attention to amuse him, he became fonder of her company than even of her son's, who, it must be confessed, began to have a greater desire for Miss Warren's company, than for that of either his uncle or mother.

This was a happiness he never enjoyed, however, but in the presence of Lady Elizabeth, to whom his partiality for her young friend was very evident.

The earl took occasion one day, when he found himself alone with Transfer, to mention young Steele's fancy for being a clergyman.

That is a business, said Transfer, which there is very little to be made of. I have no notion of purchasing in a lottery where there are so many blanks and so few prizes, my lord.

Would you not be happy to see your nephew a bishop? said the earl.

I should be much happier to see him an independent gentleman, replied Transfer.

You may enjoy that happiness when you please, said the earl; for it is in your power to make him so without injuring yourself, or any person on earth.

This led to a long conversation, in which his lordship, with less difficulty than he expected, convinced

Mr. Transfer, that nothing would do him so much honour, or contribute more to his own happiness, than executing what had been thus accidentally hinted. Mrs. Steele and her son had by their cheerful attention gained the citizen's heart so completely, as almost to alter his nature ; he had no enjoyment with which they were not intimately connected ; and when the earl told him, that by giving Steele a genteel independence, he would add the generous ties of gratitude and esteem to those of blood by which the young man was already bound to him, the citizen became impatient till the deed was drawn out, which, to the astonishment of Mrs. Steele and her son, was presented to him as soon as executed.

CHAPTER LIX.

“ Neglected, Tray and Pointer lie ;
And coveys unmolested fly.”

PRIOR.

IN the mean while, the shooting season passed away without Mr. Steele showing any desire of profiting by it ; his growing passion for Miss Warren entirely occupied his mind. He long watched, in vain, for a proper opportunity of declaring his sentiments to her ; and when the long-expected opportunity occurred, the timidity which always attends sincere and respectful love prevented him from seizing it. But the affable and obliging character of Lady Elizabeth encouraged him to mention to *her* those sentiments which he had been unable to express to the young lady herself.

Lady Elizabeth's answer implied that he ought to attempt no engagement of such a nature, without the approbation of his mother and uncle.

He said, he was certain of the former, but deferred

speaking to his uncle till he had some reason to hope that his proposals were not disagreeable to Miss Warren.

Lady Elizabeth consented to sound her young friend on the subject; but she first informed her brother.

I am rejoiced to hear this, said the earl; for Transfer and his sister seem both fond of her, and I dare say will be pleased with the proposal; Steele is so very good-humoured a young fellow, that I am convinced he will make the sweet girl happy; and in her he will have one of the best wives in England. But how is she inclined herself?

That is what I am not quite certain of, replied Lady Elizabeth; but Mr. Steele's appearance and disposition must be powerful advocates in his favour.

When Lady Elizabeth mentioned to Miss Warren what passed between her and Mr. Steele, the young lady, with some degree of solemnity and earnestness, begged to know whether her ladyship or the earl had any wish, or were at all interested in the answer she should give to Mr. Steele.

None, my sweet friend, said Lady Elizabeth; but that it should be dictated by your own genuine uninfluenced inclination.

The whole of your ever noble and generous behaviour ought to have left me no doubt of such an answer, cried Miss Warren, as she kissed her ladyship's hand. I will now, as you desire, tell you my genuine sentiments. It is some time, continued she, since I perceived Mr. Steele's partiality for me, and thought it not impossible that he might make this proposal. I have therefore had time to weigh the matter fully. Mr. Steele is evidently of a cheerful and obliging disposition; he is agreeable in his person, and I doubt not possesses other good qualities: I know what his uncle has already done for him, and what there is a probability of his still doing; yet all those advantages

do not tempt me from the happy asylum I have found at N—— House for these six years past ; and although I think myself obliged to Mr. Steele for his good opinion, I would rather remain the friend of Lady Elizabeth N—— than be the wife of Mr. Steele.

If the one were incompatible with the other, I am the last person in the world that would have proposed it, said Lady Elizabeth.

I would rather, if left to my own choice, said Miss Warren, remain the one without being the other.

Lady Elizabeth urged her friend no further, but in the most soothing terms possible communicated her determination to Mr. Steele, whose whole behaviour was expressive then, and for some time afterwards, of the severity of his disappointment, and the permanency of his esteem for the lady.

The truth was, that Miss Warren, although her heart was disengaged, and although she thought favourably of Steele in some respects, yet being herself a young lady of a very accomplished mind, she perceived Mr. Steele's deficiency in certain parts of knowledge which she thought requisite for securing to a gentleman the esteem of the world.

The effect which her refusal had on Mr. Steele's spirits appeared, in spite of his efforts to conceal it ; he was teased and distressed by his uncle's inquiries into the cause of the alteration in his spirits ; and finding no return of taste for his former amusements, he told the earl that he had a strong inclination to go abroad for a year, and begged of his lordship to endeavour to make his design palatable to Mr. Transfer.

The earl, to whom his sister had communicated Miss Warren's determination, approved very highly of Mr. Steele's plan, not only as the most likely measure that could be adopted for dissipating that uneasiness and dejection which obscured the natural gaiety

of his disposition, but also for the improvement of his mind, and enlarging the range of his ideas.

He represented therefore to Mr. Transfer, that his nephew's health was evidently on the decline, and that a short excursion to the continent was necessary for its reestablishment. After some struggle, the earl obtained Mr. Transfer's assent; Steele himself having by the same argument previously prevailed on his mother, not only to abstain from any kind of opposition, but even to be solicitous for his speedy departure.

The earl's second son, the honourable Mr. N——, had some considerable time before this returned to Italy, partly from choice, but in some degree also on account of a complaint in his breast, and was to spend the ensuing winter at Naples. Mr. Steele had occasionally heard the earl read some parts of his letters, from which, as well as from his general character, he had formed a very high opinion of him, and had a great desire to be of his acquaintance. The earl therefore gave him a letter to his son, recommending him as a young gentleman in whose welfare he was greatly interested; and Lady Elizabeth wrote to her nephew in the same strain.

When Mr. Steele came to London, he accidentally met with an acquaintance going to Milan: they went together, stopping only one day at Paris, and that merely because the gentleman had some business to transact there, which when he had finished he had the complaisance to tell Steele, that although he himself was perfectly well acquainted with Paris, and had no further business in it, yet rather than lose the pleasure of his company to Milan, he would remain a week or two at Paris, that he might have an opportunity of viewing some of the curiosities of this celebrated capital before he went to Italy.

Steele thanked him, but begged that their journey might not be retarded an instant on his account. I thought, said his companion, I heard you say you never had been here before.

I never was, said Steele.

Would not you like then to take a view of the town before we go? said the other.

Why, 'faith, replied Steele, I never had much pleasure in looking at towns; and as for this here, I am heartily tired of it already.

They set out therefore directly for Milan; and the day after their arrival Steele meeting with an English footman, who had already made the tour of Italy, engaged him, and proceeded the following morning to Rome, where he slept one night, and next day he told his servant to order post-horses, that they might continue their journey to Naples.

Good God! cried the man, will not your honour stay one single day at Rome?

I have some thoughts of it, said Steele, when I return.

He arrived in good health at Naples, where he soon found Mr. N——, who, independent of the warm recommendations from his father and aunt, was in a short time so pleased with the careless good-humour and singularity of Steele's disposition, that he procured him an apartment in the house where he himself lodged; and they had lived together ever since.

The baronet could not give so particular a detail of Steele's family as has been now given; but he mentioned every circumstance relating to them that was known to himself—after which he and Mr. N—— returned from Albano to Rome, where they found Mr. Steele just returned to his lodgings from the cricket-party.

And there we shall leave them, and return to Naples and to Laura.

CHAPTER LX.

“ Regretter ce que l'on aime est un bien, en comparaison de vivre avec ce que l'on hait.”

LA BRUYERE.

ZELUCO was not long married before it was pretty generally known, notwithstanding the intention of keeping it for some time secret. The marriage, therefore, was publicly avowed, and Laura appeared in all the brilliancy of dress and equipage which riches can procure, and the ostentatious taste of her husband exacted. She was universally admired, and the acquaintance of her husband assiduously courted by many who, previous to his marriage, showed no great inclination to cultivate it.

Possessed of great riches, with the advantage of birth, and having obtained the woman he had long ardently desired, it is natural to imagine that Zeluco now enjoyed happiness, or at least tranquillity ; but any tolerable degree of tranquillity is incompatible with perfidy and fraud : besides, this wretched man possessed two qualities which never mingle smoothly in the character of a husband ; he was excessively jealous, and excessively vain of his wife's beauty : a wiser man might have been excused for the latter, but the conduct and character of Laura left him without any rational pretext for the former. To drive round the beauteous environs of Naples in the carriage with her mother, to improve her mind by books, and to divert it, by music, from certain painful reflections which often intruded themselves in spite of all her endeavours, were the sole amusements and occupations she was inclined to in the absence of her husband. When he was present, which was by no means the most comfortable part of her time, substituting a sense

of duty, all that was in her power, in the place of affection, which she could not command, she adapted her conversation and conduct, as much as she could, to what she thought would please him : but if there are tempers of such an unfortunate frame that even when joined to goodness of disposition it is impossible to please, how then could the efforts of this unhappy young woman prove successful, who had to deal with a peevish temper engrafted on a vicious disposition ?

Zeluco's vanity was continually inciting him to carry Laura to places of public resort ; yet such was the capricious absurdity of the man, that he was at once desirous of displaying the beauty of his wife, and unable to bear the admiration which it always attracted. And when she was particularly accosted by those gentlemen whom he himself had introduced to her acquaintance, the commonest civility on her part, such as the laws of good manners render indispensable, filled him with chagrin, and seldom failed, for some hours, to throw an additional shade of ill-humour upon the habitual gloom of his temper : so that it was impossible for Laura to gratify his vanity without exciting his jealousy ; and it is difficult to determine, even during the period in which his fondness was at the height, whether she afforded *him* more pain or pleasure, while it is certain that his behaviour, from the beginning, filled *her* with vexation and remorse.

An Italian of high rank, from a different part of Italy, happened at this time to come to Naples, where he lived at considerable expense, and in an ostentatious style ; he was presented to Laura by Zeluco himself, soon after their marriage : peculiarly pleased with her conversation and behaviour, this nobleman addressed himself more to her than to any other woman, as often as he met her in public. This was remarked by Zeluco, and produced the usual effect on his temper.—Laura, conscious of no impropriety in

thought or conduct, imputed her husband's ill-humour on this, as on other similar occasions, to an unfortunate habit of fretting without cause, and took notice of it in no other way than by redoubling her endeavours to please him. Zeluco himself, though he was unable to control the sulkiness of his temper, was, for some time, ashamed to mention to her what occasioned, or rather what increased it in the present instance. At length, however, he expressed some disapprobation of the attention which this nobleman paid her.

I will most cheerfully abstain, said Laura, from going to those places where I have any chance of meeting him.

How is that possible ? said Zeluco ; he is at every public place.

I will go to no public place, said Laura.

That would seem very singular, resumed he.

The singularity is of small importance, said she, provided you are satisfied.

No ; replied he, it would be improper for you not to go to those assemblies which all people of rank frequent ; but you may behave in such a manner when you see him there, as will prevent his speaking to you any more.

In what manner is that ? said Laura.

A woman who is displeased with a man's addresses is never at a loss to find it out, replied he.

But I have not the least reason to be displeased with the manner in which this gentleman addresses me, said she ; yet, if you *have*, I certainly wish to converse with him no more.

Every woman who has no desire of pleasing a man, resumed Zeluco, knows an easy way of breaking up all connexion with him, without absenting herself from the places where there is a probability of meeting him.

Well, replied Laura, endeavouring to smile, I am a woman quite ignorant of that easy way, yet assuredly I have no particular desire of pleasing the person in question.

I am not quite sure of that, said he.

How shall I prove it to you ? resumed Laura.

By turning abruptly from him, replied Zeluco, when he next speaks to you.

Would not that be rude, replied Laura, to one of his rank, and whom you introduced to me ?—but I am sure you say this only in jest.—Come, my way is the best—let me avoid public places—at least till he leaves Naples ; it is but three weeks.

How came you to know so exactly, said Zeluco, with an air of surprise, when he was to leave Naples ?

By your informing me, replied Laura.

My informing you ! said he.

Yes, replied Laura ; do you not remember that a few days ago you told my mother and me that he was to set out for Rome in less than a month ?

The news seems to have made a strong impression on you, said Zeluco, peevishly.

Just enough to make me recollect it now, for the first time since you mentioned it, replied Laura.

Well, you will behave as you think proper, said Zeluco, in a little better humour ; but you cannot but understand his drift in the great attention he pays you.

I have seen nothing but politeness in his behaviour to me, she replied ; but the moment he discovers any drift that ought to be disagreeable to you, I shall certainly turn from him in the manner you desire.

Zeluco withdrew, and Laura, with a sigh, exclaimed, Alas ! my mother, had you known this man, the wealth of India could not have bought your consent to his being united to your poor unfortunate

daughter.—She then burst into a flood of tears; and having in this manner assuaged the anguish of her heart, she wiped her eyes, summoned all her firmness, and met her mother and husband at dinner with a serene and cheerful countenance.

CHAPTER LXI.

The Prisoners.

SOME little time after this, Madame de Seidlits received a very unexpected letter from her son-in-law, dated from Rome, in which he acquainted her, that his friend Baron Carlostein and he were just arrived in that city, and intended soon to pay her a visit at Naples.

Baron Carlostein had long had a great inclination to visit Italy, and had received his sovereign's permission for that purpose. While he was preparing for his journey, it occurred to him, that his friend Seidlits would probably be happy to have an opportunity of seeing his mother and sister, particularly the latter, of whose marriage he had lately heard. The baron therefore, asked it as a particular favour of Captain Seidlits to accompany him; and on the captain's agreeing, the king's leave was obtained for him also; and the two friends set out together. Carlostein soon perceived that his companion had infinitely more impatience to be with Madame de Seidlits and Laura, than admiration of those master-pieces of art which detain the connoisseur and antiquarian in their travels through Italy. That Captain Seidlits therefore might pass as much as possible of the period for which he had leave of absence with his mother and sister, Carlostein had the complaisance to continue his course directly, and with great expedition, to Rome. After a hasty view of

what is most remarkable in that city, he proposed to accompany his friend to Naples, remain some time there ; and, on his return to Germany, travel all over Italy with that leisure and attention which the curiosities the country presents merit.

Captain Seidlits, in his letter to his mother-in-law, assured her that the banker's failure would not be attended with the bad consequences which were feared at first ; and concluded by expressions of the warmest affection for his sister, with compliments to her husband, to whom, he added, he was impatient to be known, and whom he was prepared to esteem.

This letter was followed, within a few days, by one from Signora Sporza, informing Madame de Seidlits that Mr. N—— had met with the Baron Carlostein and Captain Seidlits at the Cardinal Berni's assembly, and had presented those gentlemen to her. She dwelt a good deal on the praises of both, adding, that they were so much approved of by the Roman ladies, that she imagined they would find it difficult to leave Rome so soon as they intended : she concluded by warning Madame de Seidlits and Laura not to be greatly surprised or disappointed if Captain Seidlits did not arrive at Naples so soon as he had appointed.

Baron Carlostein and his friend had been recommended in a distinguished manner to Cardinal de Bernis, who sent them an invitation to dinner some days after the date of Signora Sporza's letter above mentioned. At his very hospitable and magnificent board they met with the honourable Mr. N——, his uncle, Mr. Steele, and a variety of other strangers : it happened that there was at table one person, at least, from almost every country of Europe ; the conversation turned a good deal on national character, and several lively traits were mentioned by way of illustration ; but whether it was owing to a notion that the British bear strokes of this kind with less good-humour than

the inhabitants of other countries, or whatever was the cause, it so happened, that for a considerable time no mention was made of any peculiar feature belonging to them.

At length the cardinal, addressing himself to Mr. N——, said, he could not help thinking, that the melancholy generally attributed to the English nation was greatly exaggerated. He mentioned many English gentlemen with whom he had the pleasure of being acquainted, who were as gay as any Frenchmen, without the levity of which his countrymen were so much accused : besides, continued he, politely, can any thing be less probable, than that the nation, which perhaps of all others has the best reason to be cheerful, should be the most melancholy ?—In return to this, Mr. N—— observed, that what was the most probable, was not always the most true ; that, in his opinion, nothing was so much to be envied as that charming quality which seemed inherent in the French nation, of supporting, without murmuring, and even with gaiety, many of those vexatious incidents in life which sink the people of other nations into dejection, or overwhelm them with despair ; that it was preposterous to call *that* quality of the mind levity which does what philosophy often attempts in vain. As for the melancholy imputed to his countrymen, he was much afraid that, notwithstanding the particular exceptions which had come under his eminence's observation, it was but too well founded : and he illustrated his assertion by the following anecdote :

During a late war between France and Great Britain, said Mr. N——, an English vessel of superior force took a French frigate after an obstinate engagement, in which the French officers displayed that intrepidity which is so natural to them. The frigate was brought into a commercial town upon the

English coast, and the officers were treated with great hospitality by some of the principal inhabitants: one very rich merchant in particular invited them frequently to his house, where he entertained them in a very magnificent manner.—The first day on which they dined with him, his lady behaved with such peculiar attention to the prisoners, that she seemed to neglect all the other guests at her table. After the company had withdrawn, she spoke highly to her husband of the politeness and easy agreeable manners of the French nation, and added, that it gave her pleasure to perceive that the French gentlemen who had just left them, instead of giving way to vain repining, or allowing their spirits to be depressed by their misfortune, had shown the utmost cheerfulness and gaiety during the whole repast, all except one gentleman, who seemed much dejected, and almost entirely overcome with the idea of being a prisoner. This she accounted for by supposing that his loss was greater than that of all the rest put together; and she apprehended, from the obstinate silence he had retained, and from the discontent and melancholy so strongly marked in his countenance, that the poor gentleman would not long survive his misfortune.

I cannot imagine who you mean, said the husband.

The lady described the man so exactly, that it was impossible to mistake him.

That unfortunate gentleman, said the husband, is none of the prisoners; he is the captain of the English vessel who took them.

CHAPTER LXII.

Carlostein and Seidlits arrive at Naples.

ALL the allurements of Rome, however, could not overcome Captain Seidlits's impatient desire of seeing his relations at Naples; and the baron, yielding to his friend's eagerness, agreed to set out sooner than Signora Sporza had given Madame de Seidlits reason to expect.

Mr. N—— would have willingly accompanied them, provided he had been able to prevail on his uncle to go so far as Naples. But that gentleman had received some letters from England, which made him impatient to return directly; and all the fears which were suggested by Buchanan being now dissipated by the marriage of Zeluco to Laura, he rather wished his nephew to remain another season in Italy, as he had been advised, for the confirmation of his health.

Mr. N—— accompanied the baronet on his way home as far as Florence, and there took his leave of him and Mr. Steele, who had received letters from his mother and Mr. Transfer, pressing his immediate return in the most earnest terms. Steele, therefore, to the great satisfaction of the baronet, resolved to accompany him to England; and on the day they left Florence Mr. N—— set out on his return to Naples, where Signora Sporza had arrived before him.

Carlostein and Seidlits had reached that city a considerable time before either. On the morning of their arrival, Zeluco had gone to the country with the nobleman whom he had accompanied from Sicily, and was not to return till the day after. Laura determined to pass that interval with her mother.

Madame de Seidlits was delighted with the thoughts

of seeing her son-in-law, for whom she had always felt the sincerest esteem and friendship ; and Laura had more happiness in the expectation of passing some time with her brother, than in any reflection which had occupied her mind since her marriage. She likewise experienced a confused sentiment of pleasure and uneasiness, the source of which she did not clearly comprehend, in the idea of meeting Carlostein, who had struck her fancy so strongly in her youth that the impression had never since been entirely effaced.

Immediately after their arrival at Naples, Captain Seidlits waited on his mother-in-law, with whom he found his sister : when the reciprocal congratulations and compliments were ended, Madame de Seidlits, inquiring what was become of his friend, was told, that he had insisted on remaining at the inn by himself for the first day of their meeting at least, that he might be no bar to that domestic kind of conversation so natural among near relations after a long absence. I cannot bear the appearance of your leaving your friend at an inn the moment you arrive among your relations, said Madame de Seidlits : we shall have abundance of opportunities for domestic chat ; so if you think the baron can put up with a poor dinner, we had best send for him. Captain Seidlits, who had with reluctance left his friend to dine alone, heard this proposal with pleasure, saying, If that is the only objection, I shall certainly endeavour to bring him ; for I never knew any man have a greater relish for good company, and so much indifference for good fare.

This proposal of her mother's was not heard with perfect tranquillity by Laura ; who foresaw that it would lead to their passing the whole evening together ; and from what she had remarked of her husband's temper, she feared that he might not be pleased when he came to know that instead of her having

passed the time of his absence with her mother only, a young gentleman besides her brother was of the party : she could not object however without giving a reason to her mother, which she wished to conceal ; nor could she, with propriety, withdraw from a company of which her brother, so lately arrived, was one.

Captain Seidlits left them, and returned soon after with his friend.

The Baron Carlostein was at this time on the borders of thirty years of age ; he was active and genteel in his person ; he had an open manly countenance, which announced candour and good sense ; his conversation and conduct confirmed what his features indicated ; his general manner was gentle ; yet when provoked, which did not slightly happen, his fine blue eyes darted a fire very different from their usual expression.

When Captain Seidlits presented him to his sister as an old acquaintance, he was struck with admiration at the improvement which a few years had made in the graces of her face and person. Her, whom he recollected only as a lively girl, just bursting from childhood, he now beheld a woman in the full bloom of beauty, and formed by nature's finest symmetry. If he found the appearance of Laura more interesting on account of its alterations, she was the more pleased with his, because it remained the same.

After dinner Madame de Seidlits, renewing an old source of sportive dispute, said to her son-in-law, I hope your short stay at Rome was sufficient to convert you from your heretical opinions on the article of female beauty ; and you will now confess that the fine expressive countenances of the Roman ladies are far more interesting than all the bloom of the Saxon.

Captain Seidlits, however, fought the cause of his countrywomen with an intrepidity worthy of a knight-

errant. I will appeal to Baron Carlostein, said Madame de Seidlits ; his partiality for his country will not blind his judgement nor corrupt his candour—which do you think the finest style of countenance, that of the Italian, or German women ?

I prefer a mixture of both, replied he, throwing the glance of an instant at Laura.

A vous, ma sœur, said Captain Seidlits, who had accidentally taken up a guitar, the moment before he made this appeal to his sister.

Laura blushed at the import of the baron's answer, and was embarrassed by her brother's direct application of it ; she extricated herself, however, by snatching her guitar out of his hand, saying, *Volontiers, mon frere*, and instantly playing one of his favourite airs.

This turned the conversation ; and Laura, who was a very great proficient in music, was desired to play several pieces on the harpsichord as well as guitar, which she accompanied with her voice in a manner that would have delighted a far less partial audience.

The evening was spent with entire satisfaction by Madame de Seidlits and the captain ; Laura's enjoyment was blended with great inquietude ; Carlostein hardly uttered a sentence, as his friend and he returned to their lodgings ; where, pretending to be disposed to sleep, he retired immediately to his bed-chamber, and passed the night meditating on the accomplishments of Laura.

Zeluco at his return received the two strangers with politeness, and many expressions of friendship : their appearance and manners attracted the approbation of all to whom they were presented. He perceived that his connexion with them did himself credit, and therefore was unremitting in his attentions, and entertained

them with a profusion of magnificence exceeding what he formerly displayed.

Some such motive of selfishness and vanity is the usual source of *ostentatious* entertainment; friendship and cordial good-will to the guests are satisfied with mere simple preparations for their comfort and convenience.

As Mr. N—— lived in the greatest intimacy with Carlostein and Seidlits, and was highly respected by them, he was invited to all those splendid feasts which Zeluco's vanity prompted him to give for the entertainment of his brother-in-law and the baron. Zeluco was also assiduous in contriving parties of pleasure for their amusement; and often accompanied them when they went to visit the environs of this very interesting city. He engaged a certain abbé of distinguished taste in virtù to attend them as their ciceroné, and explain the antiquities brought from Herculaneum and Pompeia, and the other curiosities collected in the museum at Portici. Madame de Seidlits and her daughter were generally of those parties: but Captain Seidlits, as was already hinted, had not so great a relish for virtù as either his friend Carlostein or Mr. N——; nor was he enthusiastically struck with the various natural beauties which adorn the bay of Naples. Intended from his early youth for the profession of arms, his studies and reflections were pretty much confined to what related to the military art; and he was not solicitous of being thought a connoisseur in any other. Having honestly acknowledged that the bay of Naples was the most beautiful prospect he had ever seen, he was little disposed to say, and as little to hear, any more about it; and when the abbé began to descant on ruins, and lava, and antiques, he left others to profit by the lecture, and walked away humming a march or some other

favourite air to himself. As little could Seidlits support the abbé's dissertations on the Roman arms, and their manner of using them ; although that learned ecclesiastic explained those matters with an accuracy and minuteness which would have astonished one of Cæsar's best centurions. All this learning and eloquence were exhausted in vain to shake the early prejudice which Seidlits had conceived in favour of the firelock and bayonet. He became at length completely sick of antiquities, and often cursed those everlasting curiosities, each of which drew a lecture from the abbé, and were continually crossing their way, whatever road they took in their excursions from Naples.

When Laura was of the party, Seidlits was fond of drawing her from the rest of the company, and conversing with her apart. And she, although not exactly of her brother's way of thinking on the subject of virtù, generally yielded to his solicitation. They talked of their acquaintance in Germany ; of domestic affairs ; and sometimes their conversation turned upon Carlostein ; the virtues of his friend were a subject on which Seidlits dwelt with enthusiasm ; he was eager to enumerate instances of his generous nature, and to give proofs of the noble turn of his mind. Laura and Carlostein were the two people on earth for whom Seidlits had the greatest esteem and affection ; he was anxious, therefore, that they should esteem each other ; and with this view he was apt to dwell on the praises of each to the other. The subject was more agreeable to both than he dreamt of.

CHAPTER LXIII.

The Highlander.

“ ——— *Cujus*
Dextera per ferrum, pietas spectata per ignes.”

OVID.

CAPTAIN Seidlits was attended by an elderly man, a native of the north highlands of Scotland, whose name was Duncan Targe. As there is something singular in this man's story, and in the accidents by which he came into the captain's service, it is not foreign to our purpose to mention a few of the particulars.

His father, who rented a small portion of land of a nobleman of that country, being upon his death-bed, expressed a desire of seeing his master ; the nobleman went directly to the hut of his tenant, and consoled with him on the melancholy state he seemed to be in. I am greatly indebted to your lordship, said the dying man, for the condescension and kindness which you have always showed to me. I am now dying, my lord, and would willingly leave to so good a master what I have of the greatest value in this world.

I am happy to hear, my good friend, said his lordship, that you have any thing of value to leave ; for I was much afraid that you had lost the whole, or the greatest part, of what you had, when, contrary to my advice, you became surety for your relation at Inverness ; but whatever you have, I must insist upon your leaving it all to your little son Duncan here ; and whatever his portion is, I am more disposed to add to it, than diminish it.

Little Duncan is all I have to leave, replied the poor man ; and the greatest uneasiness I have in dying, is

the thought of the destitute condition of that poor boy ; for my relations at Inverness are all ruined by the same misfortune which has reduced me. I therefore earnestly entreat of your lordship to accept of this poor orphan, as a pledge of my regard, and the only legacy I have to bestow.

I do accept of him with all my heart and soul, cried his lordship ; and if he proves as honest a man as his father, nothing but death shall part him and me.

Praise be to the Almighty ! cried the dying man, with uplifted eyes and arms. Thanks to the gracious God of heaven and earth for all his goodness to me and mine !—Oh ! my good lord, continued he, addressing the nobleman, you have made me a happy man.—Here the sudden gush of joy overwhelmed the feeble heart of this poor man ; he fell back on his heath pillow, and expired.

The nobleman led the boy home to his castle, and, after placing him some years at school, took him to attend his own person. He was in this situation when the rebellion broke out in the year 1745 ; in which his master unfortunately taking a part, young Targe, being then a stripling of fifteen or sixteen years of age, accompanied him, and continued inseparably attached to his lordship after the battle of Culloden during a considerable time in which they skulked among the most remote parts of the highlands.

On this trying occasion, Targe, being a youth of a hardy highland constitution and spirit, had the satisfaction of repaying his master for all his former kindness by his unshaken fidelity and grateful attachment. In one or two instances he actually saved him from starving among the mountains, by bringing him, at the risk of his own life, provisions from those places where his lordship could not appear without a certainty of being discovered. At length they both escaped to

the continent, where this unfortunate nobleman died ; after which, Targe was taken into the service of Marshal Keith, by whom he was recommended to Colonel Seidlits, and now attended his son.

Buchanan and Targe generally attended their masters in their excursions around Naples. Mr. N—— had remarked an intimacy between them ever since Captain Seidlits and he met at Rome. On perceiving them walking apart from the other servants in close conversation together, I'll lay a bet, said Mr. N—— to Captain Seidlits, that your servant is from Scotland.

He certainly is originally from that country, replied Seidlits ; but I cannot conceive how you came to discover this so readily.

Nay, I should not have discovered it, said Mr. N—— ; but I was convinced by my servant's sudden and great intimacy with him that *he* had.

Some time after this, Zeluco and his lady, Madame de Seidlits, Carlostein, Mr. N——, and Captain Seidlits, went to pass the day and dine at Portici ; neither Buchanan nor Targe had been ordered to attend their masters on that occasion. As the company were returning to town, Captain Seidlits took notice of this accident to Mr. N—— ; and they amused themselves with various observations on the source of the great friendship which was so suddenly formed between their two domestics. While they were conversing, Mr. N—— saw one of his footmen coming at full gallop towards them from Naples. What is the matter, Dick ? cried Mr. N——

Lord ! sir, the man replied, Captain Seidlits's servant, Duncan Targe, has cut poor Mr. Buchanan almost to pieces.

Impossible ! cried N—— ; what ! his own countryman ?

Yes, please your honour ; they had a quarrel about

the queen ; and so they fought in the garden with broad swords.

About the queen !—Nonsense ! cried Mr. N—— ; what queen ?

The queen of Scotland, please your honour, said the servant.

The fellow's certainly mad, said N——. There is no queen of Scotland, fool.

I don't know whether there is or not, replied the servant ; but I am sure that Mr. Buchanan called her a w—— ; upon which Mr. Targe called him a liar : so they challenged each other ; and so Mr. Buchanan is desperately wounded ; and so I was ordered to come and acquaint your honour.

Being able to get no better explanation from this messenger, Mr. N—— and Captain Seidlits rode on before the rest of the company ; and after proper investigation, were informed of all the particulars of this curious adventure.

CHAPTER LXIV.

“ Dear is that shed to which his soul conforms,
And dear that hill which lifts him to the storms ;
And as a child, whom scaring sounds molest,
Clings close and closer to the mother's breast ;
So the loud torrent, and the whirlwind's roar,
But bind him to his native mountains more.”

GOLDSMITH.

WHEN the party was arranged for dining at Portici, and Buchanan understood that neither he nor his friend Targe were ordered to attend, the former invited his countryman to dine upon hotch potch and minched collops, two Scottish dishes which he had previously instructed the cook at the inn how to dress. The invitation was joyfully accepted by Targe. After dinner, as neither was an enemy to the bottle, they

pushed it pretty briskly between them, and the conversation became more and more animated every moment: while they talked of absent friends, the days of former years, the warlike renown of Scotland, the great men it had produced, and the romantic beauties of the country, they were in perfect unison; and when Targe, who had a tolerable voice, sung the songs of Lochaber, Gilderoy, The Last Time I came o'er the Mùir, and The Flowers of the Forest, the sympathetic tears flowed mutually from their eyes; but with all the prejudices which those two Caledonians had in common, there were some articles in which they differed diametrically.

Targe's birth and education have been already mentioned, and his political attachments accounted for; but Buchanan was born and educated among the Whigs of the west of Scotland, the descendants of the ancient Covenanters, who suffered so much oppression and religious persecution by the absurd policy of the ministers of Charles the Second, and his brother James, which is still remembered with horror in that part of the country.

His father was a farmer, who was at an expense which he could ill afford, by supporting him at a neighbouring university for several years; for the poor man's great ambition was to breed him to the church, or, as he himself expressed it, to *see his son George shake his head in a pulpit*. But while the youth was prosecuting his studies, the father's hopes were blasted, and Buchanan's plan of life entirely altered, by the natural consequence of an illicit connexion he had with a young woman.

This transgression being viewed in a more atrocious light in that part of Scotland than in the metropolis of England, and poor Buchanan being threatened at once with the public reprehension of the church and the private indignation of his own relations, fled to Lon-

don, and was kindly received by some of his countrymen ; in whose breasts compassion for the delinquent had greater influence than horror for his crime.

Several attempts for placing him in a more independent way having failed, and Buchanan being impatient of remaining a burthen on his friends, he accepted of an offer of going into the service of the Earl of —, where he remained several years, and was afterwards, at the recommendation of Lady Elizabeth, placed with her nephew on his going abroad.

As Buchanan's political sentiments were so different from those of Targe, it would have been fortunate if the two friends had kept clear of any discourse on such subjects ; but while Buchanan was endeavouring to prove that the city of Naples was inferior in beauty to that of Glasgow, the view from the castle of Edinburgh far more sublime than that from the castle of Saint Elmo, and the palace of Casserta, though larger, in much worse taste than Holyrood House ; Targe interrupted him, and remarked with a sigh, that it was a thousand pities that the just proprietor of that palace, the lineal descendant of so many kings, should be obliged to live like a private person in Italy.

It would be a much greater pity, Buchanan remarked, to see popery and arbitrary power established in Great Britain and Ireland.

I do not believe there was any danger of either, replied Targe.

Your creed on that subject is not gospel, Mr. Targe, said Buchanan ; in my opinion it was prudent in the nation therefore to secure those important points, by the limitations made at the Revolution.

Those limitations, answered Targe, might have been applied to king James and his descendants ; and

the same restraints which have kept one race of kings within the limits of law, would have kept another.

There is an essential difference between the two cases, replied Buchanan; a man will be very happy to accept of a good estate to which he has no immediate claim, upon conditions which the possessor of the estate and his posterity would think it a hardship to have forced on them, particularly if they believed the estate had been transmitted to them through a long line of ancestors. And it is natural to suppose, that the latter would be more apt to break conditions which they considered as unjust, than the former to destroy the sole foundation of his right: it is therefore wise, Mr. Targe, in the British nation, to adhere to the family it has placed on the throne, as long as they adhere to the conditions on which they were there placed; and I have not heard that any of them ever showed a disposition to infringe them.

Whatever reason the nation had to complain of the father, his descendants were innocent, replied Targe; and if they had a particle of equity or gratitude in their character, they never would have attempted to break through those conditions on which they were replaced on the throne of their ancestors.

Why, truly, Mr. Targe, if ever you heard of any kings who were withheld by mere considerations of gratitude or equity from extending their power, or encroaching on the rights of their subjects, when they thought they could do it with safety, you have the advantage of me; and I am apt to believe, that if ever such there were, the edition is now pretty much exhausted, and not likely to be renewed.

You seem to have a very bad opinion of kings, said Targe.

I cannot say I was ever intimate with either kings

or princes, replied Buchanan, so that I can say nothing about them from personal acquaintance ; but from what I have heard of them by word of mouth, and read of them in history, I must confess my opinion of them in general is not very favourable.

I hope you do not think them naturally worse than other men ? added Targe.

No, Mr. Targe, I certainly do not ; but they are so accustomed from their youth to be flattered and dawted*, to have every thing done for them, and to make so few exertions of their own ; often surrounded by those who have an interest in leading them astray, and sometimes by such a worthless set, that if they are not at the beginning naturally better than other men, they run a great risk of becoming artificially worse. But be they good, bad, or indifferent, I am clear for the subjects keeping such a portion of power in their own hands, as will render it very dangerous for the monarch to make any attempt against their rights ; and I am clear in another point, Mr. Targe, that when a king is such a gawk† as to fly with his young one into an enemy's land, it would be the height of folly ever to let either the one or the other back to the nest.

Well, I cannot help thinking it extremely unjust, replied Targe, to deprive an innocent person of his right, and to make him suffer so severely for the faults of others, if faults there were.

Unjust ! cried Buchanan : Does not Heaven visit the iniquity of fathers upon their children ?

Heaven has a right to do what it pleases, said Targe ; but, please God, I never would take it on *me* to do such a thing, had I the power to-morrow.

* Indulged.

† Gawk, a Saxon word still used in Scotland, signifies a cuckow, a silly fellow.

But the thing is done already, said Buchanan, and cannot be undone, without more fighting about it than he ca use is worth.

Many a brave man, not only in Scotland but also in England and Ireland, have shed their blood in the cause of the house of Stewart, said Targe.

I wish those who are disposed to shed their blood in such a cause much good of it, said Buchanan, shrugging his shoulders ; as for my own part, I shall be as ready as my neighbours to fight for my religion or my country ; but as for shedding one drop of my blood for the difference between one king and another, when the good of the country is no way concerned, I beg to be excused.

Do you not think fighting for your king, is fighting for your country ? said Targe.

Very often it is just the reverse, replied Buchanan ; fighting for a bad king, I consider as fighting against my country.

Yet you must acknowledge, resumed Targe, that kings reign by the appointment of God ; and therefore it seems to be a very daring thing in man to attempt to dethrone them.

The pestilence is by the appointment of God, retorted Buchanan ; yet we use every means in our power to drive it out of the land.

Targe seeming a little disconcerted and displeased at this observation, Buchanan filled a bumper, and gave for his toast, The Land of Cakes.

This immediately dispersed the cloud which began to gather on the other's brow.

Targe drank the toast with enthusiasm, saying, May the Almighty pour his blessings on every hill and valley in it !—that is the worst wish, Mr. Buchanan, that I shall ever wish to that land.

It would delight your heart to behold the flourishing condition it is now in, replied Buchanan ; it was

fast improving when I left it ; and I have been credibly informed since that it is now a *perfect garden*.

I am very happy to hear it, said Targe.

Indeed, added Buchanan, it has been in a state of rapid improvement ever since the Union.

Damn the Union ! cried Targe ; it would have improved much faster without it.

I am not quite clear on that point, Mr. Targe, said Buchanan.

Depend upon it, replied Targe, the Union was the worst treaty that Scotland ever made.

I shall admit, said Buchanan, that she might have made a better—but bad as it is, our country reaps some advantage from it.

All the advantages are on the side of England.

What do you think, Mr. Targe, said Buchanan, of the increase of trade since the Union, and the riches which have flowed into the lowlands of Scotland from that quarter ?

Think, cried Targe ; why, I think they have done a great deal of mischief to the lowlands of Scotland.

How so, my good friend ? said Buchanan.

By spreading luxury among the inhabitants, the never-failing forerunner of effeminacy of manners. Why, I was assured, continued Targe, by Serjeant Lewis Macniel, a highland gentleman in the Prussian service, that the lowlanders in some parts of Scotland are now very little better than so many English.

O fie ! cried Buchanan, things are not come to that pass as yet, Mr. Targe ; your friend the serjeant assuredly exaggerates.

I hope he does, replied Targe ; but you must acknowledge, continued he, that by the Union Scotland has lost her existence as an independent state ; her name is swallowed up in that of England : only read the English newspapers ; they mention England as if it were the name of the whole island. They talk

of the English army—the English fleet—the English every thing; they never mention Scotland, except when one of our countrymen happens to get an office under government; we are then told with some stale gibe, that the person is a Scotchman; or, which happens still more rarely, when any of them are condemned to die at Tyburn, particular care is taken to inform the public, that the criminal is originally from Scotland: but if fifty Englishmen get places or are hanged in one year, no remarks are made.

No, said Buchanan; in that case it is passed over as a thing of course.

The conversation then taking another turn, Targe, who was a great genealogist, descanted on the antiquity of certain gentlemen's families in the highlands, which he asserted were far more honourable than most of the noble families either in Scotland or England. Is it not shameful, added he, that a parcel of mushroom lords, mere sprouts from the dunghills of law or commerce, the grandsons of grocers and attorneys, should take the pas of gentlemen of the oldest families in Europe?

Why, as for that matter, replied Buchanan, provided the grandsons of grocers or attorneys are deserving citizens, I do not perceive why they should be excluded from the king's favour more than other men.

But some of them never drew a sword in defence of either their king or country, rejoined Targe.

Assuredly, said Buchanan, men may deserve honour and preeminence by other means than by drawing their swords. I could name a man who was no soldier, and yet did more honour to his country than all the soldiers or lords or lairds of the age in which he lived.

Who was he? said Targe.

The man whose name I have the honour to bear, replied the other; the great George Buchanan.

Who ? Buchanan the historian ! cried Targe.

Ay, the very same, replied Buchanan in a loud voice, being now a little heated with wine, and elevated with vanity on account of his name. Why, sir, continued he, George Buchanan was not only the most learned man, but also the best poet of his time.

Perhaps he might, said Targe coldly.

Perhaps ! repeated Buchanan ; there is no dubitation in the case. Do you remember his description of his own country and countrymen ?

I cannot say I do, replied Targe.

Then I will give you a sample of his versification, said Buchanan, who immediately repeated, with an enthusiastic emphasis, the following lines from Buchanan's Epithalamium on the marriage of Francis the Dauphin with Mary Queen of Scots.

*" Illa pharetralis est propria gloria Scotis,
Cingere venatu saltus, superare natando
Flumina, ferre famem, contemnere frigora et æstus,
Nec fossa et muris patriam, sed Marte lueri,
Et spreta incolumem vita defendere famam ;
Polliciti servare fidem, sanctumque vereri
Numen amicitie, mores, non munus amare
Artibus his, totum fremerunt cum bella per orbem,
Nullaque non leges tellus mutaret avitas
Externo subjecta iugo, gens una venustis
Sedibus antiqua sub libertate resedit.
Substitit hic Gothi furor, hic gravis impetus hæsit
Saxonis, hic Cimber superato Saxone, et acri
Perdomito Neuster Cimbro. —"*

I cannot recollect any more.

You have recollected too much for me, said Targe ; for although I was several years at an academy in the highlands, yet I must confess I am no great Latin scholar.

But the great Buchanan, said the other, was the best Latin scholar in Europe ; he wrote that language as well as Livy or Horace.

I shall not dispute it, said Targe.

And was over and above a man of the first-rate genius, continued Buchanan with exultation.

Well, well, all that may be, replied Targe a little peevishly; but let me tell you one thing, Mr. Buchanan, if he could have swopt * one-half of his genius for a little more honesty, he would have made an advantageous exchange, although he had thrown all his Latin into the bargain.

In what did he ever show any want of honesty? said Buchanan.

In calumniating and endeavouring to blacken the reputation of his rightful sovereign, Mary Queen of Scots, replied Targe, the most beautiful and accomplished princess that ever sat on a throne.

I have nothing to say either against her beauty or her accomplishments, resumed Buchanan; but surely, Mr. Targe, you must acknowledge that she was a ——?

Have a care what you say, sir! interrupted Targe. I'll permit no man that ever wore breeches to speak disrespectfully of that unfortunate queen.

No man that ever wore either breeches or a filibeg †, replied Buchanan, shall prevent me from speaking the truth when I see occasion.

Speak as much truth as you please, sir, rejoined Targe; but I declare that no man shall calumniate the memory of that beautiful and unfortunate princess in my presence, while I can wield a claymore ‡.

If you should wield fifty claymores, you cannot deny that she was a papist, said Buchanan.

Well, sir, cried Targe, what then? She was like other people, of the religion in which she was bred.

* To swop is an old English word still used in Scotland, signifying to exchange.

† A part of the highland dress which serves instead of breeches.

‡ The highland broad-sword.

I do not know where *you* may have been bred, Mr. Targe, said Buchanan; for aught I know, you may be an adherent to the worship of the scarlet whore yourself. I should be glad to have that point cleared up before we proceed further.

I cannot say that I understand your drift, sir, replied Targe; but I am an adherent neither of a scarlet whore, nor of whores of any other colour.

If that is the case, said Buchanan, you ought not to interest yourself in the reputation of Mary Queen of Scots.

I fear you are too nearly related to the false slanderer whose name you bear? said Targe.

I glory in the name; and should think myself greatly obliged to any man who could prove my relation to the great George Buchanan, cried the other.

He was nothing but a disloyal calumniator, cried Targe, who attempted to support falsehoods by forgeries; which, I thank Heaven, are now fully detected.

You are thankful for a very small mercy, resumed Buchanan; but since you provoke me to it, I will tell you in plain English, that your bonny Queen Mary was the strumpet of Bothwell, and the murderer of her husband.

No sooner had he uttered the last sentence, than Targe flew at him like a tiger; and they were separated with difficulty by Mr. N—'s groom, who was in the adjoining chamber, and had heard the altercation.

I insist on your giving me satisfaction, or retracting what you have said against the beautiful queen of Scotland, cried Targe.

As for retracting what I have said, replied Buchanan, that is no habit of mine; but with regard to giving you satisfaction, I am ready for that, to the best of my ability; for let me tell you, sir, though I am not a Highlandman, I am a Scotchman as well as yourself,

and not entirely ignorant of the use of the claymore ; so name your hour, and I will meet you tomorrow morning.

Why not directly ? cried Targe ; there is nobody in the garden to interrupt us.

I should have chosen to have settled some things first ; but, since you are in such a hurry, I will not balk you. I will step home for my sword, and be with you directly, said Buchanan.

CHAPTER LXV.

—*Et dulcis moriens reminiscitur Argos.*

THE groom interposed, and endeavoured to reconcile the two enraged Scots, but without success. Buchanan soon arrived with his sword, and they retired to a private spot in the garden. The groom next tried to persuade them to decide their difference by *fair boxing*. This was rejected by both the champions, as a mode of fighting unbecoming gentlemen. The groom asserted that the best *gentlemen* in England sometimes fought in that manner ; and gave as an instance a boxing match, of which he himself had been a witness, between Lord G.'s *gentleman* and a *gentleman-farmer* at York races, about the price of a mare.

But our quarrel, said Targe, is about the reputation of a queen.

That, for certain, replied the groom, makes a difference.

Buchanan unsheathed his sword.

Are you ready, sir ? cried Targe.

That I am.—Come on, sir, said Buchanan ; and the Lord be with the righteous !

Amen ! cried Targe ; and the conflict began.

Both the combatants understood the weapon they

fought with ; and each parried his adversary's blows with such dexterity, that no blood was shed for some time ; at length Targe making a feint at Buchanan's head, gave him suddenly a severe wound in the thigh. I hope you are now sensible of your error ? said Targe, dropping his point.

I am of the same opinion I was, cried Buchanan ; so keep your guard. So saying, he advanced more briskly than ever upon Targe ; who, after warding off several strokes, wounded his antagonist a second time. Buchanan, however, showed no disposition to relinquish the combat ; but this second wound being in the forehead, and the blood flowing with profusion into his eyes, he could no longer see distinctly, but was obliged to flourish his sword at random, without being able to perceive the movements of his adversary, who, closing with him, became master of his sword, and with the same effort threw him to the ground ; and standing over him he said, This may convince you, Mr. Buchanan, that yours is not the righteous cause ; you are in my power, but I will act as the queen whose character I defend would order, were she alive. I hope you will live to repent of the injustice you have done to that amiable and unfortunate princess. He then assisted Buchanan to rise. Buchanan made no immediate answer ; but when he saw Targe assisting the groom to stop the blood which flowed from his wounds, he said, I must acknowledge, Mr. Targe, that you have behaved like a gentleman.

After the bleeding was in some degree diminished by the dry lint, which the groom, who was an excellent farrier, applied to the wounds, they assisted him to his chamber ; and then the groom rode away to inform Mr. N— of what had happened ; but the wound becoming more painful, Targe proposed sending for a surgeon. Buchanan then said, that the surgeon's mate, belonging to one of the ships of the British squadron

then in the bay, was, he believed, on shore; and as he was a Scotsman, he would like to employ him rather than a foreigner. Having mentioned where he lodged, one of Mr. N—'s footmen went immediately for him. He returned soon after, saying, that the surgeon's mate was not at his lodging, nor expected for some hours; but I will go and bring the French surgeon, continued the footman.

I thank you, Mr. Thomas, said Buchanan; but I will have patience till my own countryman returns.

He may not return for a long time, said Thomas. You had best let me run for the French surgeon, who they say has a great deal of skill.

I am much obliged to you, Mr. Thomas, added Buchanan; but neither Frenchman nor Spaniard shall dress my wounds when a Scottishman is to be found, for love or money.

They are to be found for the one or the other, as I am credibly informed, in most parts of the world, said Thomas.

As *my* countrymen, replied Buchanan, are distinguished for letting slip no means of improvement, it would be very strange if many of them did not use that of travelling, Mr. Thomas.

It would be very strange, indeed! I own it, said the footman.

But are you certain of this young man's skill in his business when he does come? said Targe.

I confess I have had no opportunity to know any thing of his skill, answered Buchanan; but I know for certain that he is sprung from very respectable people. His father is a minister of the Gospel; and it is not likely that his father's son will be deficient in the profession to which he was bred.

It would be still less likely had the son been bred to preaching, said Targe.

That is true, replied Buchanan; but I have no

doubt of the young man's skill ; he seems to be a very *douce** lad ; it will be an encouragement to him to see that I prefer him to another, and also a comfort to me to be attended by my countryman.

Countryman or not countryman, said Thomas, he will expect to be paid for his trouble as well as another.

Assuredly, said Buchanan ; but it was always a maxim with me, and shall be to my dying day, that we should give our own fish-guts to our own sea-mews.

Since you are so fond of your own sea-mews, said Thomas, I am surprised you were so eager to destroy Mr. Targe there.

That proceeded from a difference in politics, Mr. Thomas, replied Buchanan, in which the best of friends are apt to have a misunderstanding ; but though I am a Whig and he is a Tory, I hope we are both honest men : and as he behaved generously when my life was in his power, I have no scruple in saying, that I am sorry for having spoken disrespectfully of any person, dead or alive, for whom he has an esteem.

Mary Queen of Scots acquired the esteem of her very enemies, resumed Targe ; the elegance and engaging sweetness of her manners were irresistible to every heart that was not steeled by prejudice or jealousy.

She is now in the hands of a judge, said Buchanan, who can neither be seduced by fair appearances, nor imposed on by forgeries and fraud.

She is so, Mr. Buchanan, replied Targe ; and her rival and accusers are in the hands of the same judge.

We had best leave them all to his justice and mercy, then, and say no more on the subject, added Buchanan ; for if Queen Mary's conduct on earth was what

* *Douce*, a Scottish expression, meaning gentle and well-disposed.

you believe it was, she will receive her reward in heaven, where her actions and sufferings are recorded.

One thing more I will say, rejoined Targe; and that is only to ask of you, Whether it is probable that a woman, whose conscience was loaded with the crimes imputed to her, could have closed the varied scene of her life, and have met death, with such serene and dignified courage as Mary did?

I always admired that last awful scene, replied Buchanan, who was melted by the recollection of Mary's behaviour on the scaffold; and I will freely acknowledge, that the most innocent person that ever lived; or the greatest hero recorded in history, could not face death with greater composure than the Queen of Scotland; she supported the dignity of a queen, while she displayed the meekness of a Christian.

I am exceedingly sorry, my dear friend, for the misunderstanding that happened between us, said Targe affectionately, and holding forth his hand in token of reconciliation; and I am now willing to believe, that your friend Mr. George Buchanan was a very great poet, and understood Latin as well as any man alive.

Here the two friends shook hands with the utmost cordiality; but Targe, observing that Buchanan's face seemed a little pale, and that the wound in his thigh bled profusely through the dressings, begged that he would allow some other surgeon to be brought; and Mr. N—'s footman swore, if he did not he would certainly bleed to death.

Buchanan having rebuked Thomas for swearing, added, You know, or at least ought to know, Thomas, that let him bleed as he pleases, no man can die till his time is come; but even if I were to die of this wound, I should be sorry that the last act of my life was that of preferring a foreigner, not only to a countryman, but to one born in the same parish with my-

self, which this young man was. As for Mr. Targe here, I take you to witness, that I declare him innocent, happen what may. As he pronounced these words, the young surgeon, who had been so long expected, entered the chamber; and having examined Buchanan's wounds, and made proper applications, he strongly enjoined his patient to keep quietly in his room for some time, without attempting to walk, otherwise the wound in his thigh would be very tedious in healing; and there might even be some risk of a fever. And the patient agreeing to follow his injunctions, the surgeon promised him a speedy cure.

Mr. N— and Captain Seidlitz heard with satisfaction the prognostic of the surgeon; and were equally astonished and entertained when they were informed of the cause and circumstances of this quarrel.

CHAPTER LXVI.

“ ————— *placet impares*
 ————— *animos sub juga aliena*
 ————— *mittere.*”

HOR.

THAT course of dissipation in which Laura was involved for a considerable time after the arrival of her brother and Carlostein, was by no means agreeable to the natural turn of her mind, yet it certainly was of service to her in her present situation. An unremitting succession of balls, assemblies, operas, and other public entertainments, however they may be oppressive to those who enjoy domestic happiness, are relaxations from domestic misery.

The dispositions of Zeluco and of Laura scarcely touched in a single point; it was impossible therefore that there could be any cordial adhesion or agreement between them: he was vain and ostentatious, she

modest ; he was dissembling, she open ; he was malicious, she candid : some of his pleasures were of so gross a nature that the mere mention of them was shocking to her ; the gentle affections of the heart, the emotions of filial affection, the glow of friendship, the effusions of gratitude, and meltings of compassion, which alternately delighted and afflicted, but always occupied the feeling soul of Laura, were sentiments of which Zeluco had hardly any idea.

Neither did the most sublime beauties of nature, the most exquisite imitations of art, or the works of genius of any kind, to all of which she was feelingly alive, afford any enjoyment to the mind of Zeluco ; although from vanity and affectation he pretended to admire some of them, and had made himself master of the common cant of *virtù*. Zeluco, in short, had no taste in common with Laura ; so that this ill-assorted pair could not carry on a conversation interesting to both on any one subject. It is true, Laura had *never* liked him ; all that Father Pedro had reported in his favour, joined to the good opinion of her mother, were not sufficient to overcome the bad impression she had early received of Zeluco ; but till she actually became his wife, she could form no adequate notion of a character whose depravity developed to her abhorring heart more and more every hour.

As soon as Laura's beauty had become familiar, and of course began to pall on the jaded senses of Zeluco, she lost, in his eyes, the only attraction she had ever possessed ; for he was incapable of deriving satisfaction from any of her numerous accomplishments, and the purity of her mind equally abominated his conversation and his tastes. He sought in venal beauty, and in variety, the pleasure which he no longer had in the chaste charms of Laura : the consequence of this pursuit was, tedious intervals of *ennui*, and its never-failing companion, ill-humour ; for what he intended to

mitigate was found to irritate the evil that oppressed him. Wretched himself, he could not support the sight of the happiness of others, and particularly nothing provoked him so much as the idea of his wife's being in a state of composure, while he felt himself tormented with malignant passions; and he often endeavoured to exhaust the virulence which corroded his own breast upon the unhappy Laura, who, before her marriage, had never known but from description what envy or ill-humour were.

Hard, however, and painful to support as his ill-humours were, it appeared not so disgusting to Laura as the fits of fondness for her with which he was occasionally seized; and such was the unsupportable caprice of the man, that his fondness was sometimes displayed immediately after having insulted her with the most unprovoked ill-usage. On those occasions he was an object of horror to her; and had what she suffered been known, this beautiful woman, who shone at every public place of entertainment in all the brilliancy of diamonds and of equipage, would have been an object of universal compassion.

In the mean time, the opportunities which Carloststein daily had of seeing and conversing with Laura, convinced him that the beauty and elegance of her face and person were equalled by her good sense and other mental accomplishments. She, on her part, thought him the most engaging of men, and felt a warmer approbation of him than of any other man whose good qualities had ever before attracted her esteem. She was conscious of a real friendship for Mr. N—, and had the highest opinion of the worth of his character; but the sentiments which she now experienced for Carloststein were of a still more interesting nature. When Mr. N— visited her, she was pleased the moment she saw him enter the room; but if he did not come when expected, the disappointment

did not so far affect the natural cheerfulness of her temper, as to prevent her from enjoying other company. But if the same happened with respect to Carlostein, if any accident prevented his coming when there was reason to expect him, her real cheerfulness fled, and nothing but an affected substitute remained with her for the rest of the evening.

Alarmed at this, and sensible of the impropriety of an attachment which was gradually gaining upon her : Ah ! let me banish this man from my thoughts, said she often to herself ; let me remember that I am the wife of another.—This immediately brought the image of that other before her mind's eye, in all the deformity of vice ; and the contrast was so striking, and so much in favour of him whom she thought it a duty to forget, that he was pressed nearer to her heart by the very efforts she made to remove him.

After remaining several months at Naples, and seldom passing a day without being in company with Laura, Carlostein had not ventured to give a hint of his passion ; but had endeavoured to conceal it from her, and the rest of the world, as much as he could ; while she, on her part, behaved with such circumspection, that neither her mother, brother, Signora Sporza, nor any other acquaintance, had an idea of her having any particular attachment to Carlostein. Even Zeluco, though cursed with a jealous temper, ever on the watch, and convinced that he never had possessed the affections of his wife, harboured no particular suspicion of Carlostein.

How well soever Laura and Carlostein succeeded in concealing their sentiments from the rest of the world, they failed with regard to each other. Laura had too much penetration not to perceive that she occupied the attention of Carlostein in an uncommon degree ; and she sometimes remarked this on occasions when a less acute or less interested observer would have been

apt to think that she engaged his attention less than any other person in company. While his behaviour to her, in the eyes of others, appeared uniform and unvaried, because it was always respectful; *she* perceived a variety of shades in his conduct in her presence, which depended, in some degree, on the company present, yet always harmonized with the humour she seemed to be in.

The sex in general are very penetrating on this subject, and it rarely happens that a man is sincerely in love with a woman, without his passion's being known to her before he is fully convinced of it himself. Notwithstanding, therefore, that Carlostein had never said a syllable on the subject of love to Laura, nor had presumed to indicate any such sentiment by his looks, or in any particular deviated from that delicacy of behaviour due to a woman of virtue; she was as fully convinced of his attachment to her, perhaps more than if he had made a solemn and earnest declaration of it.

It is more than probable that Carlostein had some idea also that he was not an object of indifference to her; for although there are accounts of ladies who, while they are passionately fond of their lovers, make them believe, for years together, that they could not endure them, it must be acknowledged that these examples are oftener found in romances than in life, and when found in real life they afford a stronger proof of the lady's pride and the lover's passion, than of the good sense of either. For our behaviour, in all respects, from things of the greatest importance to trifles, is, in spite of ourselves, different to those who engage our affections, from what it is to every other person; and the very effort to behave in the same manner to the beloved object as to others, discovers to an acute observer what is meant to be concealed; for although love is often simulated by those who have it not, it is more difficult to conceal it where it really exists: Car-

lostein, therefore, ought not to be accused of vanity or presumption, in flattering himself with no common share of the good opinion of Laura.

But he was not more fully convinced of her partiality for himself, than of her dislike to her husband ; which Laura endeavoured with equal care and as little success to hide. Such, however, was his veneration for the character of Laura, that he presumed as little from the certainty of the latter as from his conviction of the former ; indeed, he could hardly allow himself to wish for a success which he could not enjoy but at the expense of the future peace of mind of the person he loved ; and if he ever permitted himself to suppose that the woman he so greatly admired might have a moment of weakness, such was his notion of her disposition and principles, that he was convinced it would be followed by everlasting remorse on her part, and of course by misery on his ; for he could not hope that all her partiality for him, or all the sophistry he could use, would persuade a woman of real virtue and dignity to live in a manner inconsistent with both.

If, in consequence of these reflections, Carlostein had withdrawn himself entirely from a connexion of such a dangerous tendency, he would no doubt have acted a more prudent part ;—but having no delight equal to that of conversing with Laura, no wish on leaving her company but that of meeting her again, the effort was above his power ;—all he could do was to endeavour to hide a passion which he was unable to subdue.

CHAPTER LXVII.

“ Il n’y a point de déguisement qui puisse long-temps cacher l’amour où il est, ni le feindre où il n’est pas.” ROCHEFOUCAULT.

IT is not improbable that the sentiments which Carlostein and Laura mutually entertained for each other would have been discovered by Zeluco, had not his suspicions been fixed on another object : for notwithstanding the candid behaviour of his wife, when he spoke to her concerning the nobleman, as was mentioned above, the sparks of jealousy in Zeluco’s breast had never been entirely extinguished, but were rekindled more fiercely than ever on the return of that nobleman from Rome.

As Laura now appeared at all public places, he had frequent opportunities of accosting her ; and although she received his compliments with an air of great reserve, yet he omitted no occasion of addressing her.

One evening in particular, at a very numerous assembly, Laura being in company with Signora Sporza, her husband, her brother, and Carlostein ; this nobleman no sooner saw her than he made up to Zeluco’s party, and as usual directed his whole assiduity to Laura. Zeluco observed this with *stifled* rage, and *apparent* good-humour ; Laura alone discerned the hurricane in his heart through all the sunshine of his countenance.—She rose to withdraw—the nobleman offered his hand—she seeming not to observe his motion, turned to her husband, who desired Carlostein to hand her to her carriage. She immediately presented her hand to him, and the nobleman seized it.—I believe, signor, said Carlostein, the lady intended me the honour.—At that instant Laura withdrawing her hand from the other, to prevent further dispute, took

hold of Zeluco's arm, begging him to accompany her to her carriage ; which he did, and drove home.

When the assembly broke up, as the nobleman pressed across the corridor in some hurry towards his carriage, his legs were for a moment crossed by the sword of Carlostein, who instantly loosened it from his belt, making an apology : the other, without paying any regard to this, pushed forward, saying, in an imperious tone, Make way, sir!—Make you way, sir, cried Carlostein, provoked at his insolence, and pushing him to one side. The nobleman drew and made a pass at Carlostein, whose sword being in his hand, he put aside the thrust, and returning it, hit his antagonist smartly near the eye with the point of the undrawn sword, and with a jerk threw the nobleman's sword quite out of his hand.

Carlostein then walked calmly to his own carriage, where he found Signora Sporza and Captain Seidlits, who, instead of going directly to Zeluco's, where they were to sup, proposed driving a little to enjoy the refreshing breeze from the bay ; to which Carlostein assented, without saying a word of what had just happened.

Meanwhile one of Zeluco's servants, having heard an imperfect account of the squabble, hastily entered the room where Madame de Seidlits, Laura, and Zeluco were, telling them, that the nobleman and Carlostein had fought, that one of them was desperately wounded, and the other killed on the spot.

Which of them is killed ? said Zeluco.

I cannot tell, said the servant ; all I know for certain is, that one of them is dead.

Go and learn which, blockhead, cried Zeluco.

As the servant went out, Carlostein entered with Signora Sporza and Captain Seidlits ; but Laura's spirits had undergone such painful agitation from the ser-

vant's intelligence, that, after struggling for some time to hide her emotion, she suddenly fainted, and fell from her chair. Being carried to bed, she continued greatly disordered ; and even after her mother had acquainted her with the true state of the case, which she did as soon as she was herself informed of it, Laura was not able to stir abroad for near a week.

Laura having fainted just as Carlostein appeared, Zeluco's jealous temper, ever ready to put the worst construction on the most innocent occurrence, imputed her being so violently affected to her suspecting from the servant's account that the nobleman was the person killed, and her being confirmed in that suspicion when she saw Carlostein enter the room in good health.

This very idea was a sufficient reason to render Zeluco fonder than ever of Carlostein's company ; he invited him very frequently to his house, because he thought that his presence was highly disagreeable to his wife ; and this idea seemed the more probable, as Laura, being conscious of the real cause of her fainting, was evidently more constrained and embarrassed in his company than she had formerly been ; all which Zeluco imputed to her aversion to that gentleman on account of his quarrel with the nobleman.

He was confined to his room for several weeks with an inflammation which came on his eye, and some of his friends were imprudent enough to vapour a little about his determination of calling Carlostein to an account as soon as he was fully recovered. Carlostein, who was of a cool temper, took no notice of these, being resolved to regulate his conduct by the behaviour of the nobleman himself, and not by that of his officious friends ; but Captain Seidlits, who was of a more fiery disposition, did not behave with the same moderation.

In a company where the captain was, the conversa-

tion turned on the quarrel; a friend of the nobleman's gave a representation of it more favourable for him than was consistent with truth: I am convinced, said Seidlits, you have not received that account of the matter from the nobleman himself, for he knows that it happened very differently.—Do you not allow, said the other, that the baron's sword was in the scabbard?—I do, replied Seidlits.—It was highly insulting then, said the other, to make use of it in that state: Why did he not draw it?—It was a present from the king, his master, replied Seidlits; my friend has a high value for that sword, and does not like to draw it on *slight* occasions. Here, contrary to the expectation of some of the company, the conversation dropped; but it was afterwards repeated to Laura.

The next time she saw her brother, she blamed him for making so haughty an answer; adding, that it might have had consequences.—I am sorry to have done what you disapprove of, my dear sister, said Seidlits; but as for the consequences, I regard them not, and I am sure Carlostein regards them as little as I do.

Signora Sporza, who with Mr. N— was the only other person present, observed to Seidlits, that he might, if he pleased, despise the open resentment of a fair enemy, but he would do well to remember, that in the country where they were, there was a mode of avenging injuries, which his friend Carlostein ought to be on his guard against, otherwise than by relying on courage alone. She hinted at the same time, that there was a greater risk of a vengeance of the latter kind from the nobleman and his relations, than of that which Captain Seidlits seemed so much to despise.

Laura left the room abruptly when this remark was made, but not before Signora Sporza observed her change colour, and appear greatly agitated. This was the first time that Signora Sporza had any suspicion of

Laura's partiality for Carlostein; Mr. N— had conceived some notion of it a few days before from an incident not worth mentioning, and which would have escaped the observation perhaps of any other person. He found a pretext for withdrawing soon after Laura left the room; and, upon her return, Signora Sporza was confirmed in her suspicions; for in spite of the pains which Laura had taken to wash away the traces of tears, it was plain she had been crying.

CHAPTER LXVIII.

*"Nam tibi cum facie mores natura pudicos,
Et raras dotes ingeniumque dedit."*

OVID.

THE words which had fallen from Signora Sporza, concerning the resentment of the nobleman who had been hurt by Carlostein, and the mode of revenge he might adopt, made a lasting impression on Laura. She thought Carlostein in the greatest danger of being secretly murdered, if he were not openly called to the field; she considered herself as the original cause of the hazard to which he was exposed, and which she feared was increased by the imprudence of her brother: her imagination dwelt on the horrors that might ensue.

Zeluco one evening said to her, that he had an inclination to go the following day to Puzzoli, and to cross the bay between that town and Baia; and as she had expressed a desire to see the Ponte di Caligula, the baths of Nero, the tomb of Agrippina, and the other ruins of that seat of ancient luxury, he would take her with him. Laura assented. But going to bed with her thoughts brooding over the same train of reflections which had infested her mind for some days past, she dreamt of bravos and assassination the whole

night. She sometimes thought she beheld Carlostein stretched on the ground, pale and bloodless ;—at other times, the blood seemed to flow from a recent wound in his side ; and as often as she stooped to lend him assistance, she imagined that her husband prevented her by terrifying looks and insulting language. Those visions disordered her so much, that she resolved next morning to decline the proposed jaunt to Puzzoli.

Some time after she arose, Zeluco sent her word, that Captain Seidlits and he waited for her at breakfast. The captain had accidentally called earlier than usual ; and, as soon as his sister entered the room, he told her, that he and Carlostein intended to accompany Zeluco and her to Baia. Laura endeavoured to excuse herself. What is the matter now ? said Zeluco ; you had no objection last night ! She still wished to decline going ; but Zeluco, suspecting her only reason was because Carlostein was of the party, determined that she *should* go. He and Laura went in the carriage accordingly, Seidlits and Carlostein accompanying them on horseback. After wandering some time along this beautiful coast, Zeluco told Seidlits, he would lead him to see something peculiarly curious ; but, as it was at some distance and difficult of access, he begged of Carlostein to remain with Laura till their return.

Seidlits agreed to the proposal, because he thought it would be agreeable to his sister to be entertained during this interval by his friend : Zeluco made it, because he thought it would be in the highest degree disagreeable to her ; Laura heard it with surprise, and Carlostein with pleasure.

When Zeluco and the captain left them, they walked slowly on without considering where they went, and without exchanging a word, till they arrived at a shady seat, from which the various beauties around might be seen to advantage ;—here Carlostein express-

ed a fear that she was fatigued with walking. She immediately sat down, and he placed himself at her side.

Carlostein and Laura, thus unexpectedly seated together, seemed entirely absorbed in reflection, and as regardless of the sublime and luxurious scene before their eyes as if they had been blind; their mutual constraint was so great, that neither was capable of expressing a distinct idea. Carlostein made several efforts to begin a conversation, which proceeded no further than one uninteresting question and answer; Laura had been so terrified with the dreams of the preceding night, that she could think or speak of nothing but what *they* suggested. The careless and blunt temper of her brother disquieted her very much; and she greatly dreaded some mischief from that quarter.

I fear, sir, said she, making a great effort to break the silence, and forcing a smile, as if the fear she expressed had not been serious; I fear you have an imprudent friend in my brother.

Madam? cried Carlostein with surprise.

Laura repeated what she had said.

I consider your brother, replied Carlostein, as the most valuable friend that ever man had. I owe my life to him.

Nay, resumed she, I have no design to make a breach between you; but my brother has sometimes a thoughtless and provoking way of speaking, which may lead to very bad consequences, and of which it is the duty of a friend to warn him.

I do not conceive, said Carlostein, to what you allude.

Nothing, resumed she, rankles more in the heart than contemptuous expressions.

Unquestionably, answered he.

Nor, added she, is there any kind of injury more apt to provoke men to revenge.

I am convinced of it, said Carlostein, unable to guess to what she alluded.

Then surely, continued Laura with hesitation, it was imprudent in my brother to speak as I hear he did on a late occasion.

I am convinced you labour under some mistake, madam, said Carlostein. Captain Seidlits, although as fearless as any man alive, is not apt to give wanton provocation.

I was told, said Laura, that conversing lately on the unfortunate scuffle in which you were involved, he used terms which might drive your antagonist to measures he otherwise would not think of.

The accident which happened in consequence of that foolish affair, said Carlostein, he who gave the first provocation brought on himself; Captain Seidlits knows that nobody else was to blame, and I dare say he will assert this as often as the affair is talked of.

But why irritate him with contemptuous expressions? Perhaps he might become sensible he is in the wrong. What my brother says may be carried to him, and excite him to measures which otherwise he would not think of adopting.

What measure he may choose to adopt, it is his business to weigh with attention, said Carlostein; but certainly is not worth Captain Seidlits' consideration.

Friendship, said Laura, might make him consider, that contemptuous language may stimulate to a mode of revenge which no degree of courage can obviate, and no skill can ward off. She spoke these words with agitation, and the tear trembled in her eye: then, recollecting the import of what she was saying, her face was instantly suffused with blushes: yet, mustering up all the woman within her, and endeavouring to conceal the true source of her concern, she added, He does not think on the remorse and misery *he himself would feel*, should his imprudence be attended with

any fatal consequence to ——. Here, perceiving that her voice faltered, her embarrassment increased; she hesitated, and was incapable of uttering a distinct word.

It was hardly possible for Carlostein not to see the real motive of her concern and embarrassment; whatever satisfaction he might have in the discovery, he had too much delicacy to seem to perceive either.—Your brother's friendship, said he, has ever been a source of happiness to me; I should reckon myself unfortunate indeed, if it should ever become a cause of uneasiness to him, and will use every precaution to prevent such an effect, of which, however, I think there is no danger.

Laura gently bowed her head, by way of thanking him; for, although somewhat recovered from her perplexity by Carlostein's reply, she was still afraid to trust her voice with words. She then rose, and after they had walked a little way without speaking, Carlostein began to point out some of the most striking beauties of the landscape in their view; and she assented to his remarks in a manner that evinced how very little they occupied her thoughts. At length, seeing Captain Seidlits and Zeluco approaching, they moved in silence to meet them.

The latter observing the reserved manner in which Laura and Carlostein advanced, concluded that their *tête-à-tête* had been as disagreeable as he intended it should; and the melancholy air which Laura retained, in spite of all her efforts to seem cheerful, he imputed to displeasure for having been left with Carlostein.

Replete with this notion, Zeluco let slip no occasion, while they remained at the inn where they dined, of saying things which he thought would vex and disconcert his wife, without being perceived by Carlostein or Seidlits.

Has any one heard how his eye is to-day? said he,

naming the person with whom Carlostein had the quarrel.

I heard, said Seidlits, that it still continues swelled and inflamed.

I am told he runs some risk of losing it altogether, said Zeluco, looking maliciously at Laura.

I hope not, said Laura, naturally, and without observing the manner in which he had spoken.

Would it give you a *great deal* of pain, madam? rejoined he.

I should certainly be concerned that such a misfortune happened to any body, replied she, particularly on such an occasion.

You will never be forgiven by the ladies, signor, said Zeluco, addressing Carlostein, for spoiling this fine spark's ogling.

The venom of jealousy in Zeluco's breast was put into a ferment by Laura's answers, natural and mild as they were. When the company were preparing to return, Be so obliging, signor, said he to Carlostein, as to take my seat in the carriage, and let me have your horse; I should like to *ride* to town.

This obliging husband made the proposal with no other view than that of distressing his wife.—Laura's heart beat tumultuously when she heard it; the agitation which she had felt during the conversation she had just had with Carlostein, on which she already had made some reflections, added to the glow of joy she was conscious of, on hearing her husband's proposal, determined this virtuous woman to evade it:—turning from Carlostein therefore to Captain Seidlits, I have something particular to communicate to you, brother, said she, holding forth her hand; I beg you will favour me with your company in the carriage.

With pleasure, cried Seidlits, taking his sister's hand. Your wife and I have had a quarrel, added he to Zeluco, and I see she wishes for an opportunity to

make it up. So saying, he went with her into the carriage, leaving Carlostein disappointed, and Zeluco ready to burst with anger.

Whatever self-approbation Laura felt from this victory of her reason over her inclination, yet, when she observed the desponding look of Carlostein as the carriage passed him, her heart whispered, that if Zeluco should renew his proposal, she ought not to provoke him by a second refusal. She was not put to the temptation. The carriage moved on, and her brother was obliged to ask her oftener than once, What she had to communicate to him? before he was able to rouse her from the reverie in which her thoughts were absorbed, when the carriage proceeded to town.

Zeluco having invited the two gentlemen to sup at his house, where they met with Madame de Seidlits and Signora Sporza, he could not give vent to the anger which he had so absurdly conceived against his wife, but assumed the appearance of good-humour and extraordinary affection for her. Laura was too much accustomed to him to be his dupe on this occasion. She saw clearly into the real state of his thoughts; and being quite convinced of his rancour, she, who herself was all candour, was so shocked at his affected kindness, that, in spite of her unwillingness to give her mother uneasiness, she could not remain with the company, but was obliged to leave them abruptly, on the pretext of ill health.

Madame de Seidlits had intended to remain that night with her daughter; but, being at that time in a delicate state of health herself, she was prevailed on to return to her own house, upon Signora Sporza's offering to stay all night with Laura. This was infinitely agreeable to the latter, who wished to be secured from the company of her husband.

CHAPTER LXIX.

"No more can faith or candour move ;
 But each ingenuous deed of love,
 Which reason would applaud,
 Now, smiling o'er his dark distress,
 Fancy malignant strives to dress
 Like injury and fraud."

AKENSIDE.

ZELUCO retained all his hatred to Signora Sporza, though he thought it expedient to let it lie dormant for the present, and to behave to her with the attention due to a relation of his wife's family. She saw through his dissimulation, and repaid his hatred with a fixed aversion ; but this she carefully concealed from Madame de Seidlits, because she knew that it would give her uneasiness. Signora Sporza's affection for Laura was increased by her perceiving that she was unhappy in her marriage ; and perhaps by being convinced that she entertained the same sentiments of Zeluco with herself. She did not take the same pains, therefore, to conceal her sentiments from Laura that she did from Madame de Seidlits. Laura, however, would understand none of her hints, and discouraged all conversation on that subject.

Signora Sporza saw the true motive of her young friend's reserve ; and notwithstanding that it would have been agreeable to herself to have talked freely of Zeluco's behaviour and character, yet she could not help approving of Laura's prudence in declining all conversation on such a delicate subject. She beheld with more concern, that Laura was sinking into dejection of spirits ; and although she strongly suspected her partiality for Carlostein, as well as his passion for her, so far from considering this as an aggravation of Laura's misfortune, she thought an attachment of this kind might prove a solitary antidote against the gloomy

despondency, or even despair, with which her young friend was threatened.

With regard to Signora Sporza it has been already hinted, that whatever her manner of *acting* had been; she was rather a free *thinker* on subjects of this nature; for, although she had a high idea of Laura's virtuous principles, she could not but be sensible of the danger of such attachments. It would appear, however, that she thought any danger worth risking that could make a diversion from the dismal state of mind into which Laura was falling, from a continued contemplation of her miserable connexion with a morose and jealous husband.

Zeluco was the greatest of all self-tormentors; his envious and gloomy mind was eternally suggesting fresh causes of disquiet to itself. The two ideas which plagued him at present were, first that Laura disliked him, and also that she was fond of another. There was no cure for the first, but his becoming an honest man, which was not in his nature; and the cure of the other was nearly as difficult; for to remove suspicions from the breast of a man given to jealousy, and prevent their returning, would be changing his nature. This passion has a tendency not only to sour the temper, but to obscure the understanding; else how should

“ —Trifles, light as air,
Be to the jealous confirmation strong
As proofs of Holy Writ?—”

Laura having shown a disposition to remain at home on hearing that Carlostein was of the party to Baia; her having preferred her brother's company to his when they returned; her having left the company abruptly at supper; and her dejection of spirits from the time that the nobleman was confined by the hurt in his eye, Zeluco imputed to the interest which she

took in this nobleman, and to her dislike to Carlostein on that account.

Zeluco was one of those amiable creatures, who being seldom at peace with themselves cannot bear that their neighbours should enjoy tranquillity. Laura used the pretence of ill health for a considerable time after her being obliged to retire from the company at supper, merely that she might be allowed to keep her apartment, enjoy the society of her mother and Signora Sporza, and be spared from that of her husband.

When she seemed a little better, her brother was added to the number of her visitors; and even after she went abroad, she visited nobody but her mother or Signora Sporza. Zeluco explained her reserve, low spirits, and love of retirement, in the same manner that he had done her previous behaviour; and his sullenness augmented daily. Laura was endeavouring one day to divert her melancholy with her harpsichord; Zeluco heard the sound while he sat in his own apartment, and it redoubled his ill-humour. He suddenly entered the room where she was playing, and threw himself on a chair opposite to her with every mark of displeasure.

She had observed, that taking any notice of him, particularly by speaking to him on such occasions, never failed to draw from him some brutal answer; she therefore said nothing, but played an air of such soothing melody, as might have subdued the rancour of a dæmon.

You are mightily fond of Italian music, madam, said he, after some minutes of silence.

I am indeed, replied she, stopping for a moment, endeavouring to smile upon him, and then resuming the instrument.

You prefer whatever is Italian, I have observed, rejoined he, with a malignant look.

I cannot entirely say that, answered she, quitting the harpsichord; but their music is generally preferred to that of any other nation.

Yet you are half a German, resumed he.

More than half, said Laura. I was born and educated in my father's country.

It is a wonder then that you have not some partiality for your countrymen.

I esteem them highly, said Laura; all the world acknowledge them to be a brave and worthy people.

But you think the Italians more *amiable*? added he, prolonging the last word.

Laura made no answer, but applied again to the harpsichord, wishing to put an end to a dialogue which she found highly disagreeable, although she did not comprehend the motive or tendency of it.

Zeluco started up, and walked with a hurried step across the room, and then turning suddenly to Laura, You dislike the Baron Carlostein, madam, do you not? resumed he.

Dislike him, sir? said she, alarmed and blushing.

Yes, madam, you hate him.

I should be glad, said she, to have no reason to hate any body.

And what reason have you for hating him, madam?

I have not said that it is *him* I hate, replied she, with some degree of indignation.

Oh! you have not *said* it, rejoined he, mistaking the implication of her words; you have only *shown* it by your behaviour.

I do not comprehend your meaning, said she.

Why would you not admit him into the carriage on your return to Baia?

I wished to converse with my brother, said she.

Perhaps you would have preferred another to either? added he, looking maliciously in her face.

I do not know that I should, said Laura.

But I know it, madam; I know who interests you more than all the world, and on whose account the Baron Carlostein is the object of your displeasure.

Laura could not hear this name without emotion. She again coloured, repeating with a faltering voice, *My displeasure!*

Yes, madam, *your* displeasure, cried Zeluco with a raised voice; you cannot hide it, you redden with resentment at the bare mention of his name: but I would have you to know, that he is a man whom I esteem; and I wish the blow he dealt to that fine essenced minion had beat his brains out.

As he pronounced this with violent emphasis and action, he struck his cane through a mirror, and rushed out of the room, leaving Laura filled with contempt and indignation at his ridiculous and frantic behaviour.

Zeluco, like many other peevish and fiery-tempered people, was apt to display his ill-humour at the expense of his furniture; but Laura had never seen him so violently agitated on any former occasion.

She was not sorry, however, that his suspicions, since suspicions of some person or other he must have, were directed to a man quite indifferent to her.

A footman entering the room as Zeluco went out, she mentioned the mirror having been accidentally broken, and ordered another directly in its place to prevent further remarks on the subject; and she determined to pass that evening with Signora Sporza.

CHAPTER LXX.

The indiscretion of a friend.

HITHERTO Laura had been successful in her endeavours to hide from the servants the ill-footing on which her husband and she were; but Zeluco had spoken

during the foregoing dialogue in such a loud tone, that a maid of Laura's, who was in one of the adjoining chambers, heard a great part of it.

This maid felt herself quite overloaded with so much important intelligence; and seeing nobody at home to whom she could conveniently consign it, she hastened to Signora Sporza, whom she knew to be the friend of her mistress, and immediately informed her of all she had heard; and wherever there might have been a gap in the narrative from her not having heard distinctly, she took care to fill it up from her own imagination: so that the whole appeared an uninterrupted scene of brutal abuse on the part of Zeluco, and of patience and resignation on that of Laura.

When she had finished, *Voilà un homme*, said Signora Sporza, speaking in French, that the maid might not understand her, *voilà un homme fait exprès pour être cocu*. She then cautioned the maid very earnestly not to mention what she had heard to Madame de Seidlits, or to any other person, as it might be of very bad consequence to her mistress.

The maid feeling herself greatly relieved by what she had already told, and being averse to do any thing which would injure Laura, thought she might safely promise not to mention it; which she accordingly did, with a sincere intention to keep her word.

As the maid withdrew, Baron Carlostein was introduced, and soon after Signora Sporza had a proof in herself of what most people experience; how much easier it is to give good advice than to follow it: for she was so full of indignation at what she had heard, that she could not contain herself more than the maid, but told the whole to the baron, who was much more affected than surprised at the information; for, from the idea he had formed of the character of Zeluco, and what he had observed of his behaviour, particularly on the day of the jaunt to Baia, he was convinced

that Zeluco and Laura lived unhappily together, and conjectured, that scenes similar to that which Signora Sporza had recounted to him sometimes passed between them.

In her narration, Signora Sporza discovered great indignation against Zeluco; in listening to it, Carlostein seemed to think only on the unhappiness of Laura: while she abused the former, he compassionated the latter. After having exhausted her rage, however, pity became predominant in *her* breast also, and she was actually shedding tears when Laura herself entered the room. As Laura seemed surprised at finding her friend in this state, and began to inquire into the cause of her affliction, Carlostein thought it became him to retire, and leave them at liberty.

Laura then expressed the most tender anxiety for her friend, and begged to know what distressed her.

Alas! my sweet friend, said Signora Sporza, why should I disturb you with my sorrows?

That I may do all in my power to alleviate them, said Laura, that you may show you have too much confidence in me to hide the cause of your grief from me.

Have *you* shown that confidence in me? replied she.

Yes, replied Laura, in every thing that concerned myself alone, or could be remedied. Tell me, therefore, what grieves you, and prove that you think me your friend.

I think you an angel, said Signora Sporza, passionately; and I love you with all my soul; but he who is the cause of my present affliction, is the monster whom I detest as sincerely as I love you. She then threw out expressions which plainly indicated that she was acquainted with the scene above mentioned, and knew that she was very ill treated by her husband.

Good heaven ! cried Laura ; was this the subject of your conversation with the Baron Carlostein, when I entered ?

Signora Sporza owned that they had been conversing on this subject. Laura then begged of her to send to him directly, and entreat him not to give the most distant hint of what she had told him to Captain Seidlits. You do not know, continued she, the violence of my brother's temper ; and were he to hear any thing of this nature, the consequence would be dreadful indeed.

Signora Sporza directly wrote a letter to Carlostein in the terms which Laura required ; and he immediately returned for answer, that he was aware of the consequences that might follow the mentioning any of the circumstances she had communicated to him, and assuring her he never should.

This quieted Laura's anxiety on this head ; and as she could no longer entirely avoid conversing with Signora Sporza on the subject of her husband's ill treatment, she endeavoured to soften it, saying, that the particulars had been exaggerated, and that some vexations news had put him into ill-humour at that time, and made him behave in a manner different from his usual conduct.

CHAPTER LXXI.

Mr. N— hears from the baronet.

IN the mean time the honourable Mr. N—'s intimacy with Carlostein and Seidlits continued, and gradually grew into friendship, especially with the former, for the character and tastes of Mr. N— were more analogous to those of Carlostein than of Seidlits ; yet he had also a very great degree of esteem for the

latter. It is remarkable, that the friendship between Mr. N— and Carlostein was not interrupted by their being fond of the same woman: both esteemed her highly, neither had a wish inconsistent with her honour; and although Mr. N— perceived that Laura had a stronger attachment to Carlostein than to any other person, he had also that degree of candour which so few possess, of being able to acquiesce in a preference against himself.

Mr. N— had heard no account of his uncle the baronet, or Mr. Steele, since he parted with them at Florence; and he had begun to be uneasy about them, when he received a letter from the former, dated Paris, the import of which was, that they should be detained in that place longer than they had intended, by a hurt which Mr. Steele had received in consequence of a fall from his horse, in attempting to leap over a gate in a field a few miles from Paris; that a French gentleman, who saw the accident, had brought him to town in his carriage, much bruised; but he was already better, and would soon be quite well.

The baronet next mentioned, that one *Carr*, a Scotchman, who pretended to be an acquaintance of Buchanan, had called on him, saying, he had lately come in a trading vessel from Naples to Marseilles; that on his landing he had met with a young sailor, who, some years since, had gone to the East-Indies as midshipman in an English frigate, which had been lost on the coast of Malabar, but he, with a few others of the crew, was saved; that after various distresses, he had been taken into one of the vessels of the country, and again shipwrecked in the Persian gulf; had remained several years in Persia, afterwards had found means to get to Alexandria, and from thence in a trading vessel to Marseilles, where this Carr had met him, and they had travelled together on foot to Paris; but on account of his sharing his purse with this poor

sailor, who then lay sick at their lodgings. Carr pretended that his own finances were exhausted : on which account he applied to him for a small supply of money to enable them both to proceed to London. The baronet concludes his letter in this manner :

“ You may believe, my dear N—, that I was willing to relieve a man who had behaved so generously ; but I wished, in the first place, to ascertain the truth of this Scotchman’s story, which I own I thought a little romantic. I gave him, therefore, only a guinea in the mean time, and desired him to return next morning with some proof that he was of Buchanan’s acquaintance ; and I sent Mr. Steele’s servant, Tom Dawson, with him to his lodging, with another guinea to the English sailor. Tom returned within a couple of hours, and informed me he had seen the sailor, who was a young man of three- or four-and-twenty, of the name of Warren ; that Carr had shown him a letter which he said was from Buchanan to a countryman of theirs at Edinburgh ; that, having broken open the seal of this letter, Carr desired Dawson to carry it to me as the only testimony he could give of the truth of his story.

“ After perusing it, I own I have no doubt of the truth of what Carr told me, and shall certainly supply these two poor fellows with money sufficient to carry them home. Buchanan’s epistle is so characteristic that I had it transcribed, and now send you the copy. As you are no very enthusiastic virtuoso, it may possibly entertain you as much as any manuscript lately dug out of Herculaneum.

“ There is another composition which I should be very well pleased to get a sight of, and that is by no less a personage than Steele’s servant, Dawson. He told his master the other day, he wished to go to Versailles ; and being asked what business he had there ? he said, He had received a letter from Ben Jackson,

your father's groom, desiring him to be sure to send him a description all about France and Paris; and he therefore wished to add a word or two about Versailles, being the king's country-house. Steele, who, you know, would suffer great inconveniency himself, rather than deprive any person depending upon him of such a gratification, immediately assented; and he tells me that Dawson has been scribbling ever since his return. An account of Paris, and of the French nation, from such a hand, must of course be entertaining. I am sorry, therefore, I cannot send it you with the inclosed.

“Adieu, my dear Edward,—Believe me ever sincerely
Yours, * * * * *

CHAPTER LXXII.

Buchanan's letter.

To Mr. Archibald Campbell, tobacconist, at the sign of the Highlander, Canon-gate, Edinburgh.

“Dear Archy,

Naples.

“I RECEIVED your kind epistle, with the agreeable news that all our friends in the West country are well. I would have acknowledged the favour long ago, but could not find a private hand to carry my letter; for I do not choose to put my friends to the expense of postage, and therefore I make it a rule never to write by the post to any but strangers.

“Your fears of my having forgot you are very ill founded; for although it has been my lot, to sojourn many years among strangers, yet, thanks be unto God, I never learned to prefer foreigners to my own countrymen: on the contrary, I do feel that I like my old friends the better in proportion as I increase my new acquaintance. So you see there is little danger of

my forgetting *them*, and far less my blood relations ; for surely blood is thicker than water.

“ As for my master, the honourable Mr. N—, he is an exception ; for he has been my benefactor, and it is impossible for me to be more attached to the nearest relations I have than to him : he is a kind-hearted and noble-minded gentleman indeed ; and although he is most generous on proper occasions, he avoids the idle expense of many of his countrymen, whose extravagance, when they are on their tours, as they call them, renders them the prey and laughing-stock of all the countries through which they pass. And if you were only to see the sums which those thoughtless young lads, who have ten times more money than wit to guide it, throw away on useless *nigg-nyes* *, while thousands around them are pinched for the necessities of life, it would make the very hair of your head, my dear Archy, stand up like the locks of Medusa.

“ Before we left England, which, as I wrote to you at the time, Mr. N— was advised to do on account of his health, I endeavoured to persuade him to go and drink goats'-whey among the healthful hills of the highlands, where there are neither coughs, colds, nor shortness of breath, and where he could have lived like a king at a moderate expense ; but he was prevailed on to try Italy, which has, to be sure, succeeded pretty well ; but I am still in hopes that he will some time or other make a visit to Scotland, for he always speaks with respect of our country, which the ignorant and worthless of the English never do.

“ You desire my opinion of Italy and its inhabitants, which I shall now give you without prejudice or partiality. The Italians are a most ingenious people. I have been even tempted to think that there is something favourable to ingenuity in the very air or

* *Nigg-nyes*, or bawbles.

soil, or something else belonging to this happily situated peninsula of Italy, for it became in the first place the seat of the empire of the world by the valour and address of its inhabitants ; when I say the world, I mean all but the northern part of Great Britain, which the Romans were so far from subduing, that they were obliged to build walls and ramparts across the island ; first, between the Firths of Forth and Clyde, and next, from Carlisle to Newcastle, to defend themselves from our ancestors the Caledonians.

“ But when the Roman empire was overturned by the Goths, Rome became the seat of a new kind of empire, and that is the empire of the Popes. In short, the inhabitants of Italy first subdued mankind by open force ; and secondly, by imposition and pawkry*. And after several ages of Gothic darkness, where does the light of knowledge first dawn again ? Where do the arts first appear ; and where are they carried to the greatest perfection ? Why, in this same Italy. This looks, I say, as if there were something peculiarly favourable to ingenuity in this country. But whatever may be in that notion, with all the disadvantages to which they are exposed from a miserably bad government, the present race of Italians certainly are a civilized, discreet, sober people, not so frank as the French, nor yet so reserved as the English ; but with more shrewdness of understanding perhaps than either.

“ In the formation of statues and graven images, they are supposed to surpass all the nations in Europe ; for, in our own country, you know, this occupation was never much encouraged, because, in the opinion of several serious Christians of the presbyterian persuasion, it flies in the teeth of the second commandment.

“ The Italians are fond of music to an astonishing,

* Pawkry, cunning.

and even to an unwarrantable, degree; the number of eunuchs which they employ at a great expense, is a pretty plain proof that they spare nothing to have their ears tickled; they even oblige them to sing in the very churches; yet surely they might find houses enough to keep concerts in without profaning the house of God.—What would you think, Archibald, of hearing a dozen of fiddlers playing in the High Church of Edinburgh before and after sermon on the Lord's-day? I am sure it would shock you, as it did me, to a very great degree.

“Some people endeavour to defend this, saying, that it assists devotion, and a great deal of idle *clishmaclaiver** of the same kind: for my part, I have no good opinion of that sort of devotion which a parcel of fiddlers can assist. And people may argue as they please, but assuredly fiddles are better contrived to promote dancing than either meditation or prayer. At the same time it must be confessed that Italian music, when performed in a proper place and on proper occasions, is very delightful to hear; though the best of it never thrilled through my heart so pleasingly as the sweet melody of some of our own tunes.

“As to the vulgar notion, that the Scottish music was invented by David Rizzio, the Italian secretary to Queen Mary, it is contrary to history, to tradition, and to common sense; for nothing requires a greater degree of popularity, or would be a stronger proof of a man's being esteemed and universally admired in a country, than his forming the national taste in music: but David Rizzio, poor creature, was universally hated during the short time he lived in Scotland; and if any tunes had been known to be of his invention, that circumstance alone would have been sufficient to prevent their ever being sung or played in that country.

* Idle tittle-tattle.

“ You inquire also concerning the city of Naples compared with other places:—I will only say in a few words, that it is a large and populous town, pleasingly situated in the view of a spacious bay, little inferior in beauty to Loch Lomond itself. The houses are built of free-stone, several stories high, so that it has a more lofty appearance than London, but not quite so sublime as Edinburgh.

“ But it is not in the appearance of the fields, or of the cities, nor in the customs or genius of the inhabitants, that the country where you reside has the great advantage over this land of darkness, but in the important article of religion; which here consists almost entirely of external show and gewgawry, of bowings, courtesies, and various gesticulations, of fantastical dresses, processions, and other idle ceremonials, which are in no way connected with true piety, and altogether opposite to the simplicity of the Gospel, which you, my dear friend, enjoy the inestimable privilege of hearing preached in its native purity and truth.—As for your high dignified clergy, their lordships, and their eminencies, and his holiness himself, I have heard some of them perform; and if I may judge of the rest by those I have heard, they are mere pigmies upon pedestals, compared with the preachers you have an opportunity of hearing every Lord's-day.

“ Having now briefly touched upon most of the points you mention in your last letter, I must recommend the bearer to your friendly offices; his name is Andrew Carr, of the Caris of the South, his father being a shoemaker in Selkirk; he came to this country in the service of an English gentleman, whom he was obliged to quit through the malice of the valet de chambre, who, taking advantage of the young man's being overtaken with liquor on the last St. Andrew's day, turned him off, on the pretext of his being an habitual drunkard.

“ He remained however at Naples, in expectation of being taken into the service of some other English gentleman; and being young, thoughtless, and of a canty* turn of mind, he lived for some time very idly. When any of the English servants were allowed a day of pleasuring, as they call it, Andrew was sure to be of the party; and, at this rate, all the money he recieved from his late master would soon have been *cast at the cocks*†:—but in the midst of this he received a letter from his mother at Selkirk, informing him of his father’s death, by which she and his sister were reduced to great poverty and distress. This news made a most laudable alteration in the conduct of Carr; he shunned all those parties of which he had formerly been so fond. And when our Dick pressed him very much, saying, You used to be as fond of mirth and good wine as your neighbours, Andrew shook his head, and replied, Gif I drink wine, Richard, my mother and sister must drink water; and the very next day he called on me with forty dollars, which he desired me to pay to Mr. N—’s banker, for an order on a house at Edinburgh, to remit the value to his mother. Mr. N— was so much pleased when he heard of this, that he doubled the remittance to Carr’s mother, and also furnished him with money sufficient to defray the expense of his journey through France to Edinburgh, where, by my advice, he intends to establish himself as a dancing-master, being one of the best dancers of an English hornpipe, a Scottish jig, or a strathspey, that I ever saw. It is a thousand pities that he continued so long at the shoemaking trade; because the constant stooping has given a roundness to his back and shoulders, which hurts his air a little in daucing of a minuet; but he is to remain three weeks

* Cheerful.

† Thrown away.

or a month at Paris to improve himself, which will remove that impediment.

“ I desire that you will put my namesake, little Geordy, to Mr. Carr’s school, and I beg that you will assist him by your recommendation.

“ I send by Mr. Carr two tortoise-shell snuff-boxes, one for you, and the other for Mr. Mackintosh; they are in the Neapolitan taste, only, instead of their usual ornaments, I caused the maker to inlay the first with a golden thistle, with the inscription, *Nemo me impune lacessit*; and the other, with a cat rampant, which is the crest of the Mackintoshes, and the motto, *Touch not the cat but * a glove*. I hope you will accept of them as small tokens of my friendship to you both. I send also a blue velvet bonnet as a new-year’s gift to little Geordy. I must now end this long letter, begging to be respectfully remembered to the Laird of Clairvoky and his lady, to Mr. Hector Monro, and his cousin Æneas, to black Colin Campbell, and blind Saunders, and to all inquiring friends on the water of Enrick; and so, my dear Archy,

“ I remain your affectionate cousin,

“ GEORGE ECHANAN.”

CHAPTER LXXIII.

Dawson’s letter.

ALTHOUGH the baronet could not with propriety get a sight of the letter which Dawson had been so long and so carefully composing for the benefit of his friend Ben Jackson, we have had the good fortune to pro-

* Without.

cure a copy, faithfully taken, from the original ; which is here inserted as a companion to the foregoing.

A Monseer,

Monseer BENJAMIN JACKSON, che le

Count de _____,

_____shire,

Engliterr.

“ Dear Ben,

“ HAVING received yours per course, this serves to let you know, that I am well and hearty, and so is Sir — ; but as for Mr. Steele, he had a fall from his horse in taking a very easy leap, which hurt him a little, but he is growing better, thank God, for he is as good a soul and as generous to servants as any alive : — it was all the horse’s fault, *that* I must say in justice to Mr. Steele, who put more trust in this lazy toad than he deserved ; being deceived by the owner, who pretended he was a very good leaper. Now, to say the truth, I have not seen many tolerable horses fit for hunting in all this town ; and as for the women, about which your sister Bess makes inquiry, they are all for the most part painted, at least their faces : then for the rest, they hardly ever nick their tails, I mean of the horses ; for England is the only country for horses and women. I do not believe that all Paris could produce the like of Eclipse, and your sister Bess.

“ Since you and your sister Bess desire it, I shall now write to you a little about the description of this here town and country. In my own private opinion, Paris is but a tiresome town to live in, for there is none of the common necessities of life, as porter or good ale ; and as for their beef, they boil it to rags. Wine to be sure is cheaper here, but not so strong and genuine as in London.

“ I have been at the French king’s palace, which they call Versailles in their language : it is out of

town, the same as Kew or Windsor is with our king. I went first and foremost to see the stables, which to be sure is very grand, and there they have some very good-looking horses, especially English hunters: it grieved me to see so many of our own best subjects in the service of our lawful enemy, which to be sure the French king is.

“We little think how many of our fellow-creatures are seduced from England to distant countries, and exposed to the worst of usage, from both the French and Spaniards; for none of them know how an English horse ought to be treated.

“When I was at Versailles, I saw the Dowfiness, which is all the same as the Prince of Wales’s wife with us; she is one of the prettiest women I have seen in France, being very fair and blooming, and more like an English woman than a French, and not unlike your sister Bess, only her dress was different.

“She rides like the ladies in England, with both her legs on the same side of the horse, whereas I have seen many women since I came abroad ride on horseback like men, which I think a bad contrivance, and I am surprised their husbands permit it. But I am told, the women here do whatever they please, for all over France the gray mare is the better horse. Yet what contradicts this, and which I cannot account for, is what I heard my Lord D—’s butler tell yesterday; which is this, that by a law which he mentioned, but I have forgot its name, though it sounded something like a leek,—by that there law, he said, that no woman can be king in France; that is, he did not mean by way of a bull, for he is of English parentage, born at Kilkenny, but he meant, that no woman can ever be queen in France, as our women in England are. As for instance, suppose the king has no sons, but only a daughter; then when the king dies, this here daughter, according to that there law, cannot

be made queen, but the next near relation, provided he is a man, is made king, and not the last king's daughter, which to be sure is very unjust. But you will say, Can there be no queen in France then? Yes, whoever the king marries is queen; and as long as her husband lives she may govern him, and rule the nation as much as she pleases; but when he dies, she is not permitted to rule any longer, except the next king pleases.

“Now this shows, and you may tell your sister Bess so, that in spite of all the coaxing and courting which the French use to the women, yet they are false-hearted towards them at the bottom, and do not respect them so much, as to the main point, as we English does; and yet one of those d—d parlivoos will go further with some women in a day, than an Englishman in a month—all owing to their impudence; for a common man has as much impudence in France, as a man-midwife has in England. By-the-by, Ben, I wonder you allow Tournelle, my lord's French servant, to be so much with your sister Bess; he pretends to teach her the French cortillong, but who knows what sort of cortillongs he may try to teach her? In my own opinion, old John Lancashire could teach her dancing as well, and this would be more decent for the reputation of her vertue: but you need not show this part of my letter to Bess, but make your own use of it.

“I have seen the French horse-guards, which they call jangdarms; the men are smart-looking young fellows enough, but the horses are poor washy things in comparison of our dragoons.

“The Swiss guards are stout men, clothed in scarlet, the same as our soldiers; but they have moustaches on their lips like the ratcatcher in St. Giles's.

“The French foot guards are dressed in blue, and all the marching regiments in white, which has a very

foolish appearance for soldiers ; and as for blue regimentals, it is only fit for the blue horse or the artillery.

“ I believe the French army would have no great chance with our troops in a fair battle upon plain ground. It is lucky for the Mounseers, that there is no road by land between Dover and Calais ; but as it is, I wonder the king does not send some regiments by sea to take Paris, which could make no great resistance ; for there is no walls round the town, and there would be a good deal of plunder.

“ But, after all, I like Paris better than Naples, though it is so near Mount Vesuvius, which all strangers go to see, the same as they do St. Paul's, the Monument, and lions in the Tower of London : it is to be sure continually smoking, and throwing out fiery ashes and other combustibles, such as none of our English mountains does. I went one night to the top of it with Mr. N—'s valet Buchanan, and one Duncan Targe, another Scotchman ; I thought I should have been choked with the smoke and sulphurous smell. But as for Buchanan and Targe, it gave them no disturbance ; the reason of which I take to be, that the Scotch are accustomed from their infancy to brimstone and bad smells in their own country. I do not say this by way of disparagement to them two, who are no bad kind of men—only a little proud ; but of the Scotch in general, who, in my opinion, ought to be restrained by act of parliament to their own country, otherwise I do believe, in my own conscience, sooner or later, they will eat up Old England.

“ I have sent unto you, by the bearer, a pappy mashee tobacco box, and a dozen pair of gloves for your sister Bess, who will also deliver to you this letter, which I have taken three days in writing, to oblige you and Bess ; and I durst not write by the post, for if the French found this letter, they would take me up for a spy, and shut me up in the Bastile during my

life; and in England, I am told, all foreign letters are opened by the ministry; in which case this might bring you into trouble, because of the box and gloves, which being counterband against the act of parliament, the king would be enraged if he knew of such a thing, which stands to reason, all smuggled goods being so much money out of his pocket.—All from, dear Ben, with my kind love to your sister Bess,

“Your servant to command,

“THOMAS DAWSON.”

CHAPTER LXXIV.

A letter from the baronet to the honourable Mr. N—.

A FEW posts after the arrival of this packet, Mr. N— received the following letter from his uncle:

“My dear Edward,

Paris.

“I WILL now give you a little more of Carr the Scot, and the English seaman.—In consequence of Dawson’s having mentioned to his master, that the latter seemed sickly, and was but very indifferently accommodated in lodgings, Steele had the humanity to do what I ought to have done, but which I confess I neglected. He sent a physician to visit him, who having given it as his opinion, that the young Englishman required nothing but rest and proper diet to re-establish his health, Mr. Steele then sent for the landlord of the house where Carr and he were quartered, desiring that he would immediately give them a more convenient apartment, and let the young man have that particular diet which the doctor recommended; for all which he indemnified the man by an immediate advance of money, and sent a message to the sailor, that he wished to see him as soon as he could

easily walk to the hotel, which was at no great distance from their inn.

“Carr and Warren came together two days after receiving this message; the latter is a well-looking man, of about twenty-three or twenty-four years of age; he appeared emaciated, but is naturally of a stout constitution, and mends daily. He was desired to sit down, and he gave a short account of his disasters and long residence in Persia, in a modest and sensible manner.

“But I leave you to imagine our surprise and pleasure, when in the course of the conversation we discovered that this sailor is brother to Lady Elizabeth's young friend Miss Warren; the same who went in a frigate as a midshipman to the East-Indies the year before her father's death, and was supposed to have been lost in the passage, as neither the vessel nor any of the crew were afterwards heard of. You must remember Lady Elizabeth's relating those circumstances to you and to me at N— House, one day after Miss Warren left the room, which she did on your mentioning an East-India ship's having struck on a bank in going out of the Channel; and your aunt at the same time begged of you to be guarded in your discourse in that young lady's company, as every hint relative to naval engagements or shipwrecks was apt to rouse within her mind the painful recollection of her own family misfortunes. I will not attempt to describe young Warren's joy, on my informing him that I was acquainted with his sister, and that she was well and happily situated; nor how suddenly that joy was checked, when he inquired about his father. I answered, I had heard nothing of him very lately; but the youth had observed, that Steele made a sudden involuntary movement at the question, and he saw me look sorrowful when I made the answer. Alas, cried

he, wringing his hands, my father is dead—I shall never see him more. We were silent; which rendered his suspicions certainty. The young man then burst into tears. After allowing them to flow for some time in silence, I told him that his father had died in battle, exerting himself gallantly in the cause of his country. The satisfaction which this communicated was visible through his tears; he made me repeat all the circumstances I knew, again and again. I shall never forget the emotion and ardour which appeared in the youth's countenance while he listened.—My father, cried he with exultation, was a brave officer.—That he was, said I. I had the honour of knowing him; his behaviour during the action in which he fell was praised, and his death regretted by the whole fleet. The young man continued to shed tears.

“Steele is a worthy fellow—I like him more and more; he took hold of Warren's hand, and was going to say something consolatory to him; but his voice failing, he also burst into tears, and he only could utter the words *Damn it*, while he hastily rubbed his eyes, in a kind of indignation at finding himself crying. I said every thing that I imagined could soothe young Warren;—we ordered an apartment for him at our hotel;—poor Carr was exceedingly happy: he said, he had always suspected that Mr. Warren was of genteel parentage, and even attempted to make an apology for some parts of his own behaviour which he thought had been too familiar. You may easily conceive how this was received by one of Warren's sensibility; he shook him by the hand, called him his benefactor, and said he would never forget what he owed to him. Carr, however, declared he knew what belonged to a gentleman and the son of an officer, and only desired leave to continue to attend him in the quality of a servant till his arrival in England; and notwithstanding

all Warren could urge, he would remain with him on no other conditions.

"I have prevailed on this young man to accept of my credit for what is immediately necessary for his decent equipment. All his misfortunes have not damped his fondness for his profession. He has no views nor hopes independent of it; and his most ardent wish, after seeing his sister, is to return to his duty, in the hopes of promotion as an officer. Steele is wonderfully attached to him, and Warren seems to have the warmest esteem and most grateful affection for Steele, who is now so well that we think of leaving this in a few days; and my next letter, I hope, will be dated from N— House. God bless you, my dear Edward!"

CHAPTER LXXV.

A second letter from the baronet to the honourable Mr. N—.

Two or three weeks after this, Mr. N— received another letter from his uncle, of which what follows is an extract:

"Our reception at N— House was most joyful; Steele's mother and his uncle Transfer were both there when we arrived. The former flew with impatience into her son's arms before he had finished his compliments to your father and Lady Elizabeth. Transfer assured Steele, as he shook him by the hand, that he was not so happy even at the peace, although he had then gained six thousand pounds by the rise of stock. While the mother, uncle, and nephew were entertaining each other, I presented young Warren to his sister. The tenderness of this scene exceeds my power of

description; your father was moved even to tears, while Lady Elizabeth beheld it with a smile of serene satisfaction. I do not know how to account for this; for who is more alive to the feelings of humanity than her ladyship? Perhaps she had anticipated the meeting in her imagination: so that, when it actually took place, nothing happened but what she had foreseen; whereas your father was taken by surprise; or perhaps Lady Elizabeth's attention to support her young friend during this pathetic interview prevented her from being so much affected herself as she would otherwise have been.

“Young Warren behaved with great propriety; for his behaviour was natural. His first expressions were those of the most affectionate tenderness for his sister; his next, of gratitude to Lady Elizabeth and your father, for the parental kindness they had shown to his orphan sitter; the mention of which brought the recollection of their own father into the minds of both. The fine countenance of Miss Warren, bathed in tears, fell upon her brother's shoulder, while he, greatly agitated, was scarcely able to sustain her and himself.

“In this attitude they continued for some time in the midst of a group too much affected to give them any interruption.

“Miss Warren seeming to recover herself, and attempting to apologize to the company, Lady Elizabeth took her by the hand, and said, I beg you will come with me, my dear, I have something to say to you. Then, supporting Miss Warren with one hand, and drawing her brother after her with the other, she conducted both into another room. You must have many things to communicate in which you will be under restraint from the presence of even your best friends. So saying, she left them together, and returned to the company.

“Mrs. Steele was inclined to have a *tête-à-tête* with

her son ; but Transfer, who observed her drawing him apart, opposed it, unless he were admitted of the party ; he swore he loved his nephew as well as his sister could love her son, and he had no notion of allowing him to be seduced from him on the very day of his arrival.

“ After Warren and his sister had been together about an hour, he called in Carr, whom the young lady was most desirous of seeing. She seems almost in love with this fellow ever since her brother informed her of Carr’s behaviour to him ; and respects him so much for the goodness of his heart, that she cannot bear to hear him turned into ridicule on any account.

“ I read Buchanan’s letter the other day to your father and Lady Elizabeth. We laughed a little at an expression in it concerning Carr’s air in dancing a minuet. Miss Warren did not quite relish the jest. I do in my conscience believe, that had a man, with the face and person of the Belvidere Apollo, neglected her brother in his distress, no future attention to herself could have made this young lady respect him so much as she does this poor fellow.

“ The enthusiastic affection of Miss Warren for her brother bodes well for our friend Steele, who is her passionate admirer as much as ever ; and, if I am not greatly mistaken, the lady views him already in a different light from what she did before he went abroad. I am so much convinced of this, that I have ventured to give Steele some encouraging hints to that purpose. Your father also wishes him to renew his addresses, and I am certain that Steele’s heart prompts him to the same ; his natural diffidence, however, joined to the abhorrence he has for importuning any body, have hitherto restrained him ; he derives little encouragement from Miss Warren’s affable behaviour to him, which he entirely imputes to complaisance for her brother, whose friendship for Steele increases daily. But in my opinion,

independent of all consideration of her brother, the damsel herself now views honest Steele with other eyes than she did formerly. Indeed both your father and Lady Elizabeth declare, that he is improved in many respects by his travels. Possibly you may lay claim to part of the honour of this, for I believe you were his only *ami du voyage*. Adieu, my dear Edward. I rejoice in the accounts of your continued good health, and hope you will stay no longer abroad than the time requisite for confirming it, so that you may never again need to quit Old England on that account."

CHAPTER LXXVI.

Prudent conduct of Laura.

IT is now full time to return to Laura, from whom the reader may perhaps think we have been absent too long. When we left her, she had prevailed on Signora Sporza to write to Carlostein, and had seen his answer, wherein he gave assurances not to give the least hint to his friend Captain Seidlits of the ill footing on which Zeluco and his sister were. After the discovery made by the maid to Signora Sporza, it was no longer in Laura's power to adhere to the plan she had formed, by avoiding conversations with Signora Sporza on a topic which she introduced as often as they were together by themselves. And in the course of those conversations, Signora Sporza made no scruple of giving it as her opinion, that Laura ought not to submit to the caprices and ill-humour of a man she did not love, and whom it was impossible she ever should; one, whose love for her was already exhausted, and which, if it should ever return, must, now that his true character had developed itself, prove a curse, not a blessing, to his wife: the best measure which Laura

could adopt, therefore, was, to inform her mother and brother of the true state of the case, and to separate, on the best terms they could procure, from her husband for ever.

Nothing was more earnestly desired by Laura than a separation upon any terms from Zeluco; but as this could not be done without informing her mother of the misery of her situation, she could not bear to give a parent, for whom she felt the most tender affection, the remorse of thinking that *she* had been the most active cause of her child's misery. She was also afraid of her brother, whom she knew to be of a temper to call her husband to a severe account for his conduct towards her, the consequences of which in every point of view appeared to her dreadful: a third consideration, it is probable, had some weight with her—she had reason to believe she was with child.

Laura, therefore, insisted firmly with Signora Sporza to be allowed to judge for herself in this particular, and convinced her, that she should be highly offended if Signora Sporza gave the least hint of the terms on which she was with her husband to her brother, or any other person.

Notwithstanding the precautions which Laura took to keep her mother from the knowledge of what would give her too much uneasiness, if that lady had not been a little dazzled by the glitter of magnificence which appeared in the equipages and domestic establishment of Zeluco, and flattered by his specious behaviour to herself, she would have discovered that her daughter was unhappy. With regard to Captain Seidlits, he thought his sister so very amiable in all respects, that it never entered into his mind, that the man who possessed her, and who could have no motive but love for his original attachment to her, did not think himself happy in the acquisition; and although it sometimes occurred to him, from the pensive and me-

lancholy air of his sister, that she might not be so very fond of her husband as could be wished, he considered that as a misfortune which she had in common with many women, and for which there was no remedy; and he turned his thoughts from it as from an idea which if indulged could only plague himself, without being of service to his sister.

It has been already remarked, that the many fine qualities and accomplishments which Laura possessed, and which would have fixed the esteem and affection of a man of worth and sentiment, had little attraction for the jaded senses and corrupt taste of Zeluco, who sought in venal beauty and in variety a relief from *ennui*, and its never-failing companion ill-humour: but all those palliations, instead of diminishing were found to augment the incurable disease under which this wretched man laboured; who, when he became unsupportable to himself, often endeavoured to exhaust the virulence which corroded his own breast upon her, who, before she knew him, had never known what *ennui* or ill-humour was.

Distressing, however, as his ill-temper was, it did not seem so dreadful, as was already observed, in the eyes of his wife, as the returns of fondness with which he was occasionally seized. An attachment, therefore, which Zeluco formed about this time, and was considered as a source of great affliction to his wife, proved in reality one of the most comfortable incidents to her that had occurred since her marriage.

CHAPTER LXXVII.

*Nerina.**— genus huic materna superbum**Nobilitas dabat, incertum de patre ferebat.*

VIRG.

Two ladies had lately arrived at Naples; one of them an elderly woman, the other about three- or four-and-twenty, and of uncommon beauty. The account given of them by the banker on whom they had a credit, and which was supported by letters to individuals at Naples, was, that the youngest had a moderate fortune in her own possession, on which she lived in a genteel and independent manner, and had come to pass a few months at Naples, that she might enjoy the benefit of a purer air than that of Rome; that the elder lady was aunt to the younger, and the widow of an officer; that she was in reduced circumstances, and dependent on her niece.

Such was the account given of those two ladies, whose real history was as follows:

The young one, whose name was Nerina, was the offspring of a secret amour between an unmarried woman of family in Genoa and a musician. The affair had been hushed up; the lady being delivered at the house of a female relation in the country, the infant given to the wife of a peasant to suckle, and the father retiring to Venice, where he lived on the profits of his profession and on the money which he received from the child's mother. His demands became more exorbitant than it was in her power to satisfy; he wrote menacing letters, but no threats could procure from her or her relations what satisfied the rapacity of the musician; on which he formed a scheme to carry away

the child from the peasant's cottage, and convey her to his own house at Venice. He succeeded in his project by the connivance of the maid who had the care of the child. Having this pledge in his hands, he imagined that the mother or her relations would be more solicitous to furnish him with money ; it happened otherwise ; the unhappy mother retired to a convent, where in a short time she was seized with a fever, of which she died. After this, her relations set the musician at defiance, and gave themselves no further trouble about him or the child. The musician was a man of the most profligate principles and manners ; he lived with a woman of the same character, who was a singer at the Opera. With this couple Nerina was educated ; she had a pretty good voice, and promised to be remarkably handsome. They expected that in a short time the circumstances of the family would be greatly augmented by a proper use of both : but Nerina was not of a disposition to share the profits arising from her personal accomplishments with any person whatever ; at the age of fifteen, therefore, she abandoned her father's house, and the territories of the Republic, in company with a Venetian nobleman. She was acquainted with the circumstances of her own birth ; and although in her disposition she had more affinity with her father than with her unfortunate mother, yet in conversation she seemed to consider herself as descended from her mother alone, and never mentioned her father, more than if she had not known of his existence. She lived with the Venetian, till his flow of money, which was considerable at the beginning of their connexion, began to ebb ; she then left him for a young Englishman, with whom she embarked in a high tide of fortune, and at last quitted him for the same reason that she had quitted the Venetian. She afterwards established herself at Rome ;

and wishing to acquire a decent character, she took an elderly woman into her service, who she pretended was a relation of her mother's, and lived for some time with as much affected modesty as a great deal of natural impudence would permit.

It is said, that people are apt through life to set too great a value on those things which they have found it difficult to procure in their youth, and too little on those to which they have been accustomed. Nerina had been bred in a family in which there was a great scarcity of money, and a profusion of what is sometimes, however improperly, called love. Whether it was owing to this, or from whatever cause it proceeded, certain it is, that Nerina, in all her dealings, showed the utmost attention to the former, and made very little or no account of the other.

While Nerina lived in this *decent* style at Rome, she was protected by a certain cardinal, who sometimes saw her in secret, and by whose friendship she flattered herself, that she should be enabled to pass the rest of her life without having need of other protectors; but before she could get matters arranged to her satisfaction, an accident happened to the cardinal, which, according to his own calculation, should not have happened for several years, and which Nerina did not wish for till the arrangements above mentioned had taken place. The cardinal died the day after he had passed an evening with Nerina, during which he had been more profuse than ever of his expressions of *friendship*.

Nerina was so violently affected by this premature accident, that, in her rage, she could not abstain from many abusive expressions against His Eminence, for having so long delayed what she thought it was his duty to have performed; but her passion subsiding by degrees, she at length mustered up all her philoso-

phy, which directed her, without further loss of time, to have recourse to several protectors to indemnify her for her loss of one of the cardinal's importance.

Among those was a young man of a noble family of Milan, who became desperately in love with her, and for whom she affected a reciprocal flame, but with this difference, that the young man's continued to burn with undiminished fervour after the fuel which fed Nerina's was quite exhausted. As soon as she perceived that his money was gone, and understood that he had but distant hopes of a fresh supply, a chilling alteration seemed to take place in the bosom of Nerina; and the youth, instead of smiles and caresses, was received with formality and cold politeness.

The imprudent youth, unable to bear this kind of behaviour from a person who commanded all his affection, proposed marriage as the only recompense he could make to her, now that his finances were exhausted.

This offer made an immediate impression on the mind, and some alteration in the behaviour, of Nerina; but after weighing every circumstance, and balancing the advantages and disadvantages of closing with the proposal, she concluded, that it would be attended with more trouble than she was willing to bestow, and more risk than she chose to run. She therefore fell on means, without appearing to have given the information, of acquainting her lover's relations, that he had got into bad company at Rome, and that, if he were not removed immediately, he was in danger of taking an irretrievable step of the most fatal consequence to his honour and happiness. She amused the youth himself with evasive answers, till one of his relations arrived at Rome, with peremptory orders from his father, for his immediate return to Milan; which the young man with infinite reluctance at length obeyed, after mutual oaths of eternal love, and many tears on

his part as well as that of Nerina, whose agent received a liberal recompense for the intelligence.

The young man being thus disposed of, and Nerina having a desire to see Naples, she did not think those acquaintance whom she had occasionally seen, unknown to her Milanese lover, and to each other, of importance enough to induce her to balk her fancy.

She went accordingly, and established herself with her pretended aunt, in the manner that has been mentioned.

CHAPTER LXXVIII.

"Il y a dans la jalousie plus d'amour propre que d'amour."

ROCHEFOUCAULT.

ZELUCO accidentally meeting with Nerina, was sufficiently touched with her face and figure to wish to cultivate her acquaintance. He found no unsurmountable obstacle to this; but Nerina, knowing him to be a man of great fortune, thought it worth her while to use all her powers of attraction, which, particularly to a man of Zeluco's character, were very strong, till by degrees she cherished what was only a transient desire into a violent passion.

He wished however to conceal his connexion with Nerina from his wife and her relations; and although he visited her very frequently, it was always in secret; so that their intimacy might have remained much longer unknown, had all the world taken as little pains to discover it as Laura and her relations. But Laura received two letters in one day, both from unknown and *sincere friends*, giving her a faithful account of her husband's intimacy with Nerina; and explaining how she might detect it. One of those friends was a woman with whom Zeluco had intrigued, and

who took this step to be revenged of him for his infidelity; the other was a lady who suspected that her husband was fond of Laura, and hated her on that account, although well convinced that he would not succeed. It would have been mortifying to those two benevolent creatures, had they known how very little their intelligence affected Laura. She was in the act of throwing their letters into the fire when her husband entered the room: You seem very eager to burn those letters, said he. Their contents are of a nature too indifferent for me to be eager about them, replied she.—Pray, who are they from, if it be not a secret? added he.—It is a secret; said she. Indeed! said he, snatching one of the letters that was not consumed, from the fire, “may I be admitted as a confidant?—You had better not read it, said Laura coolly, and without attempting to take it from him.—Why so? said he. Because, replied she, the contents will be as little satisfactory to you as the method of obtaining them is honourable.

So you are afraid of my reading it? said he. I have no fears on the subject, replied Laura, walking towards the door.

Stay, madam, cried Zeluco, who knew the hand, and, having observed the name of Nerina in the letter, suspected the contents. I have no intention to read this scroll, only your affecting not to know from whom it came surprised me.—It is no affectation, I have not the least notion, said Laura.—What then, they were both anonymous?—They were, added she.—Some jest, I suppose, said he, throwing the letter again into the fire, or perhaps some piece of malice.—Very possibly, said she, and left the room.

While Zeluco had held the half-consumed letter in his hand, he recognised the writing of the lady with whom he himself had intrigued. Knowing the jealousy of her disposition, and perceiving Nerina's name

in the middle of the letter, he immediately suspected its contents; and, *albeit unused to the blushing mood*, he underwent something approaching to it, on perceiving that he had betrayed unjust suspicions of his wife, at the very instant that she received information of his own infidelity.

For some time after this incident, Zeluco behaved with more attention to Laura, and affected a greater share of good-humour than was natural to him, while she showed no symptom of being in any degree affected by the intelligence conveyed in the anonymous letters; nor did she ever after by any allusion or hint revive the recollection of them.

In the mean while Mr. N— prevailed on Captain Seidlits to make a tour with him into the two Calabrias, and other parts of the kingdom of Naples; Carlostein having declined to accompany them, saying, as he was to remain in Italy after Seidlits, he would postpone it. Zeluco became daily more intoxicated with Nerina; she almost continually occupied his thoughts, and engrossed the greatest part of his time; so that Laura was left at more freedom and in greater tranquillity than she had ever enjoyed since her marriage. Her husband's vanity with regard to her was considerably abated; so that he no longer insisted, as he had done formerly, on her appearing at every assembly and public place; he was better pleased that she should remain at home, at her mother's, or Signora Sporza's, while he was passing his time with Nerina, and of course being missed from assemblies, it might be believed that he was keeping his wife company.

Laura's society at this period therefore was confined to her mother, Signora Sporza, and Carlostein; the latter she saw almost every day, and frequently had opportunities of conversing with him alone at the house of Signora Sporza. This too indulgent friend, being exceedingly affected at the settled gloom which she

well saw had overspread the mind of Laura, and which she thought the company and conversation of Carlostein alone had the power of dissipating, contrived frequent means of bringing them together ; and this she did with such address, that they seemed to happen by accident, and without any previous arrangement on her part. Nothing could be more imprudent than the conduct of Signora Sporza, in leading her young friend into such slippery situations, which she did however from no other inducement than the pleasure she took in seeing Laura pleased and in good spirits. As for Zeluco, she thought he richly deserved the worst that could happen ; for, in her opinion, he had already put it out of his wife's power to do him injustice : but there is one consideration, which, had it occurred to Signora Sporza, would have made her act very differently from what she did ; and that is, the effect that any essential ill-conduct would have had on the mind of Laura herself. Signora Sporza did not reflect that, had this been the case, no alleviation from peculiar circumstances, no provocation on the part of her husband, no certainty of concealment, and no consideration of whatever kind, could have made a woman of Laura's disposition forgive herself, or could have restored her that peace of mind without which happiness cannot exist.

It must be owned that the virtue of few women was ever placed in a more perilous situation than that of Laura, when it is considered that she had a fixed and well-grounded aversion for her husband, constantly kept alive by fresh provocations ; for she was by turns teased by his caprices, abused by his unprovoked rage, insulted by his groundless jealousies, and stimulated by his infidelity ; while a most amiable and accomplished man, for whom she could not help feeling a great partiality, was desperately in love with her, and

with whom she had frequent opportunities of being alone.

She received a second letter from one of her anonymous correspondents, informing her, that her husband and one of his associates, with Nerina, who was also to have a companion, had formed a party to pass a few days at Casserta and other places, and were to set out that very day. Laura was as little affected by this letter as the former; she threw it into the fire, and thought no more of it.

That very day, Zeluco, without the shadow of provocation, but in the mere wantonness of caprice, behaved to her in the most insolent and brutal manner, telling her, that her *favourite*, meaning the nobleman who had the squabble with Carlostein, had abandoned her, and set out for Venice, and he supposed *that* was the cause of her low spirits. On her keeping silence, he told her that her silence proceeded from insolence and pride.

You are mistaken, said Laura; I never *was* insolent, and I never had less reason to be proud; I was silent, from contempt of an accusation which I cannot think you yourself believe to have any foundation.

Contempt! cried Zeluco, fiercely.

Contempt of a groundless accusation, replied Laura.

Your contempt is affected madam, said Zeluco; but your melancholy is real.

My melancholy is indeed real, said Laura, bursting into tears.

After uttering some shocking observations on her being so much affected, and the supposed cause, he said, I am going to the country for a few days, madam, and leave you to mourn that your minion is not at hand to comfort you during my absence.

CHAPTER LXXIX.

The portrait.

LAURA gave free way to the fullness of her sorrow for a considerable time after her husband left her ; but at last, fearing that her mother might call and observe the traces of affliction on her countenance, she went to Signora Sporza's, that she might have time to recover herself, in some degree, before she should meet with Madame de Seidlits.

The servant did not know that the Baron Carlostein was with his mistress ; he therefore told Laura that Signora Sporza was alone, and immediately introduced her into the room, where she found them conversing together.

I have been just telling the baron, my dear, said Signora Sporza to Laura as she entered, that I have a letter to write ; I beg therefore you will entertain him till I return.

Carlostein perceived the marks of anguish which the last scene with her husband had left on the countenance of Laura ; and he conjectured rightly respecting the cause. Without asking a question, or uttering a syllable, his countenance expressed a thousand tender inquietudes on her account. After a considerable silence, he at length said, Would to Heaven, madam, it were in my power to alleviate your sorrow, or contribute in any degree to your happiness !

My happiness! repeated Laura, raising her spread hands, and throwing up her eyes to heaven.

Yes, madam, cried Carlostein with great emotion ; *your* happiness, which is dearer to me than my own, or rather which, more than any personal concern, is my own.

Ah! why, said Laura, should your fair prospects be

obscured by the tempests in which mine — Here she checked herself, and then added, My thoughts are disturbed, sir, I am not well.—I know not what I say.

I have long dreaded, said Carlostein, that you were not fortunate in all your connexions; but you are blessed in some beyond the usual lot; you have the best of mothers, a brother who adores you, and friends who would cheerfully expose themselves to every fatigue and danger to serve you.

My brother, sir, said Laura, first taught me to value his friend; I learned the lesson in my childhood, and it were vain for me to affect not being pleased with the interest you take in me; but a series of unlucky incidents has involved me in a net of misery from which the endeavours of all my friends cannot disentangle me.—Happiness and tranquillity are fled far from me,—I attempt not to recover what is beyond my grasp. Here she burst into a fresh flood of tears, and Carlostein had bathed her hand with his, while in the excess of her despair she was insensible that he had hold of it. He attempted to comfort her by every suggestion that could convey hope or consolation.—No! exclaimed she; death must be my only comforter; there is no hope for so complete a wretch as I am, but in the grave;—and miserable creature that I am, resumed she, after a pause; I cannot without reluctance even wish for that last refuge of the miserable; how can I have the heart to wish for ease to myself, knowing, as I do, that it cannot be obtained but at the expense of my poor mother, who would be left a prey to remorse, horror, and despair!

Carlostein then in the most sympathizing manner, and with all the eloquence of passion, declared the highest esteem and attachment to her; that he would consider it as the greatest honour and happiness he could ever enjoy, to attempt whatever could tend to her ease or satisfaction; that he esteemed fortune, and

life itself, as valuable only in as much as they should enable him to serve *her*, whose happiness was far dearer to him than life.

Alas! cried Laura, the completion of my misery is the being sensible that you can be of no service to me. I am convinced that your generous friendship would excite you to exertions of difficulty and danger in my favour; but I am in that hopeless state, that my best friends, those united to me by blood, as well as those attached by sentiment, must struggle equally in vain to free me from the horrid rock of misery to which I am fixed by chains which no earthly hand can break.

Accursed chains! cried Carlostein, they were forged in hell, and ought not to bind an angel!

They will ever bind me, said Laura.

O loveliest and dearest of women! cried Carlostein with enthusiasm; why did I not know you sooner? Often did I hear the praises of the accomplished Laura Seidlits—whom I had only seen in childhood; but could I imagine there was such perfection, such elegance, such soul-subduing loveliness, united in woman?

Declarations of this nature, uttered with all the energy of truth and passion, by a graceful and amiable man, for whom she had the warmest friendship, at a time when she was full of indignation at the brutal behaviour of a hated husband, could not fail to make a lively impression on the heart of Laura, endued with exquisite sensibility, and formed for friendship and love.

Why did not your brother and I, exclaimed Carlostein, follow you to Italy sooner?—Why did we loiter at Berlin and Vienna while the fiends were weaving this web of wretchedness?—O! would to Heaven we had hurried directly to Naples!

Would you had! said Laura in a languid voice.

Bless you—bless you, my angel, for that wish! cried Carlostein, encircling her waist with his arms.

In this situation Laura seemed for a short time to have lost the power of recollection; but raising her eyes, they met the portrait of her father, which hung on the opposite wall of the room.—She gave a sudden scream, and struggled to get free.

What is the matter, my angel? said Carlostein.

Ah! loose me; unhand me, sir, cried she with a voice of terror, and sprung from his yielding arms.

What terrifies you? said he.

Look there! cried she; pointing to the portrait.

I see a picture, said Carlostein.

I see an angry father, said Laura with a trembling voice.

Carlostein then endeavoured to soothe and calm her spirits by the most endearing expressions; but as often as he approached her she moved from him, and entreated him to be gone.

If I have offended you, cried he, most earnestly do I beg your forgiveness.

I cannot forgive myself, replied Laura.

In what are you to blame? angel of purity! exclaimed he.

Leave me; O leave me! repeated she; it is not meet for us to be thus together.—Pray withdraw.

When shall I see you again? said Carlostein in a plaintive voice.

You shall hear from me soon, answered she; but at present, if you have any esteem for me, leave me.

Carlostein retired; and Laura, turning to the portrait of her father, continued for a considerable time contemplating it with earnestness, and then exclaimed, Blessed effigy of one to whom honour was dearer than life, how much am I beholden to you!

When Signora Sporza returned, she seemed surprised at the absence of Carlostein. Laura said, he was obliged to go, and immediately turned the discourse to other subjects.

The two following days Carlostein found no opportunity of seeing Laura: being uneasy at the idea of having offended her, he told Signora Sporza, that he was afraid her friend had misunderstood some part of his conduct which he wished to explain, and begged she would deliver a letter for that purpose, as he was unwilling to send it by a servant.

Signora Sporza complied with his request, and the next day presented him with the following answer from Laura.

“ To the Baron Carlostein.

“ THE uneasiness you express at the idea of my being displeased with you, may now be at an end.—I never thought you capable of any formed plan inconsistent with my honour. But I am sensible that the pleasure I took in your conversation, and in the thoughts of your friendship, has led me into improprieties and dangers which a prudent and virtuous woman should avoid.

“ The ties by which I am bound to my husband are sacred, however miserable they render me. Although his behaviour deprives him of my esteem, it cannot justify my ill conduct.

“ Having said this, you cannot, with reason, blame the resolution I have taken, never again to meet you alone. I am persuaded, my cousin Sporza would not have permitted such meetings if she had not a higher opinion of me than I deserve.

“ It will be vain for you to endeavour to prove the innocence or safety of our meeting as formerly; the only effect of such an attempt would be to diminish the good opinion I entertain of you.

“ Adieu, and may Heaven bless you! Every proof of regard and confidence, consistent with duty, you may always expect from the wretched

“ LAURA.”

CHAPTER LXXX.

" — *Miseri quibus
Intentata nites.* Hor.

HOWEVER vexed Carlostein was at the thoughts of being deprived of the pleasure of seeing Laura as formerly, he was too well convinced of the propriety of her conduct, and too much afraid of losing her good opinion, to make any immediate attempt to prevail on her to alter it.

He immediately signified, in a letter which Signora Sporza delivered to her, his gratitude for the friendship with which she honoured him; adding, that although he perceived not any danger in the meetings which she had determined to discontinue, yet he acquiesced in her decision, and would conform himself in that, and in every thing else, to her pleasure.

He saw her occasionally, however, at her own house, where he was frequently invited by Zeluco; and as, after the scene at Signora Sporza's, Laura's behaviour to Carlostein was a little more constrained than usual, Zeluco was more and more convinced that his wife struggled in vain to conceal the dislike she had to him.

It is probable that he would have discovered his mistake in this particular, had not his mind been engrossed by his passion for Nerina, for whom he had taken a little villa at some distance from Naples, where his visits, he imagined, would be less observed than while she lived in town.

The symptoms of pregnancy became apparent on Laura, which rendered the retirement she loved more expedient than ever; and as Zeluco was seldom at home, she was for several months almost entirely relieved from his jealousy, ill-humour, and fondness.

In truth, Nerina had as little affection for Zeluco as

Laura had ; but it was much easier for the one to feign sentiments which she had not, than the other : the first had been reared from her infancy in the school of simulation ; in her all the alluring tricks of educated artifice were engrafted on a disposition naturally fraudulent. The other was habituated to truth ; had she been inclined to dissemble, she must have failed from want of practice. And if both had been equally mistresses of deceit, still Nerina would have had the easier task in affecting to love Zeluco ; she only had to get the better of indifference, whereas Laura had to overcome aversion.

Zeluco had from the hour of his marriage observed extreme coldness in Laura ; and although, from a very short period after their union, he had never been able so far to overcome the natural sulkiness of his character as to make a fair trial to gain her affection, yet he considered her want of it as a crime ; for self-love made him think it impossible that a woman should be cold to him, who was not capriciously prepossessed in favour of another.

Nerina had two objects in view : the one was to persuade Zeluco that Laura was attached to another man ; the other, that she herself was desperately fond of him. She had hitherto found no plausible opportunity of insinuating the first, but she endeavoured to convince him of the second by ten thousand little attentions, by flattering fits of jealousy, by occasional resistance, and other allurements, which she well knew how to vary opportunely ; she had already drawn very considerable sums of money from him, and had acquired such an ascendancy over him as she hoped to improve into a complete and absolute sway.

If Zeluco happened to dine for two days successively at home, or to mention Laura with any degree of respect, he was sure soon after to find Nerina in apparent languor and ostentatious dejection of spirits :

when questioned by him on the cause, she sighed, affected to hide her tears, and begged that he would not inquire into the cause of that for which she had too much reason to fear there was no remedy. On being further urged, she would sob, shiver, and fall into a convulsive fainting; and when she had performed this with admirable nicety of action, she seemed to recover, and, after a fresh discharge of tears, lamented the severity of her fate, in being passionately fond of a man who, after the sacrifice she had made, preferred another to her; and, what was still more mortifying, one who hated and despised him.

At other times she insinuated that his wife's relations formed a cabal to manage him entirely; that they had already taken advantage of the easy generosity of his temper, and prevailed on him to settle a large portion of his fortune on her and her children, and had plans of carrying their rapacious views still further, so that in a short time he would be little more than a factor on his own estate.

CHAPTER LXXXI.

The displeasure of Captain Seidlits;—the distress of Laura;—the prudence of Carlostein,—and good sense of Mr. N—.

SOME time after Seidlits returned from his tour he heard of this connexion with Nerina, and perceived, with an indignation which he could ill suppress, that Zeluco had not the same degree of attention for Laura that he formerly displayed.

Captain Seidlits dropped some expressions to that effect in the presence of his sister. She was alarmed at the consequence of his harbouring such suspicion, and endeavoured to remove it; but fearing that she

had not succeeded, she earnestly begged that he would not ruin her mother's peace by mentioning his suspicion to her.

It is not to your mother, but to your husband, I mean to talk on the occasion, said he.

Laura then endeavoured to convince him of the impropriety of his interfering undesired between man and wife, adding, that she was sensible of the fraternal interest he took in whatever concerned her, that it was her pride and happiness to have such a friend and protector, and that she would apply to him freely when she needed his interposition.

Laura was so distrustful of her brother's temper, that she renewed her remonstrances frequently on this subject. It happened once or twice that Zeluco entered the room on these very occasions, and she remarked with great pain, that Seidlits could with difficulty conceal his feelings, and that he returned the civilities of the other in a very cold manner.

This increased her fears so much, that, in the presence of Signora Sporzà, she acquainted Carlostein with the cause of her uneasiness, and entreated him to watch over his friend, and endeavour to dissuade him from a conduct fraught with the most dismal consequences. Carlostein expressed his satisfaction at the confidence which she placed in him, and promised to do every thing in his power to prevent what she dreaded.

Carlostein soon after happened to meet his friend Seidlits walking by himself, and ruminating on the various instances he had observed of neglect or ill-usage on the part of Zeluco towards Laura.

You seem thoughtful, my friend, said Carlostein ; something vexes you.

Something does vex me, said Seidlits.

You do not intend then, I hope, that it should be a secret to me?

No, certainly.—This Zeluco, I fear, does not use my sister as she deserves.

I do not know who could, said Carlostein.

He seems to be of a sulky, ill temper, said Seidlits.

If that be the case, it is a misfortune to all who are connected with him, replied Carlostein, but most of all to himself.

But it ought to be a misfortune to himself only, said Seidlits, not to her who has the sweetest temper on earth; and I am determined that his ill-humour shall not make my sister unhappy.—The same world shall not contain me and the man who behaves ill to Laura Seidlits.—I'll tell him so this very day.

Have you any particular instance of ill-usage to complain of? said Carlostein.

Why, there is this woman, replied Seidlits, this Nerina, with whom he passes so much of his time; *that* must be mortifying to my sister, and shows what a brute he is; and besides, his general manner to her is not kind and attentive as it ought to be, and as it shall be, *that* I am determined on.

My dear Seidlits, said Carlostein, what answer do you think you would give to any man who should tell you, that he did not approve of your keeping company with a particular woman, and that you ought to behave with more attention and kindness to your wife?

Well, if any man did speak to me in that manner, I should certainly give him satisfaction one way or other.

That kind of satisfaction is easily given, said Carlostein; but your object is to promote your sister's happiness?

My sole object! replied Seidlits.

How would it be promoted should you fail? said Carlostein.

Why, that kind of reasoning might be applied with

equal justness, if I should demand satisfaction of the man who pulled me by the nose. You might ask what satisfaction I should receive in case I myself should fall. In short, continued Seidlits, this is not an affair of reasoning, but of feeling; and, by heavens! this fellow shall not behave improperly to *my* sister.

Since it is entirely an affair of feeling, replied Carlostein, some regard should be paid to the feelings of her who is chiefly concerned. Has your sister ever complained of her husband, or given you any hint of his having treated her ill?

You know, replied Seidlits, of what heavenly mildness her disposition is; she will bear much without complaining.

But as she has never mentioned any thing in the nature of complaint to you, said Carlostein, it is possible that part of what you suspect is groundless; and if she has reason to complain of some things, it is probable that she considers them of far less moment than what she would suffer by your quarrelling with her husband. On the whole, it is clear that you ought to have a little patience, till it is more evident that your suspicions are well founded, and then I shall be happy to concur with you in taking the most likely measures for your sister's relief.

Although Seidlits remained convinced that his sister had cause to complain of her husband's conduct, yet Carlostein at length obtained his promise that he would not speak on the subject to Zeluco, without first acquainting his friend.

When Carlostein gave an account of this conversation to Laura, notwithstanding his softening some parts of it, she continued exceedingly apprehensive of some fatal scene between her husband and brother. She again mentioned her apprehensions to Carlostein in the presence of Signora Sporza; and knowing that it was part of their plan to visit Sicily before their return

to Germany, she expressed her wishes that Carlostein would prevail on her brother to set out with him immediately.

As at this time Laura's spirits were much dejected, and as she found in the company of her brother and Carlostein the only cordial which could raise or support them, nothing but the affection which she had for her brother, and the dread of his being involved in a quarrel with her husband, could have enabled her to resist the arguments which the baron could not help urging against their leaving Naples till she should recover from her lying-in, and in this he was assisted by Signora Sporza.

Laura's own inclinations were on the same side with the eloquence of Carlostein, yet she had the firmness to persevere in her request that they would depart; she even used the circumstance of her being soon to be confined as a fresh argument: For since during my confinement I cannot see my friends at any rate, said she, it is best that you seize that interval for your tour; and by the time you return I shall be sufficiently well to enjoy your company.

Carlostein therefore gave up the point, and prevailed on Seidlits to adopt the measure which his sister had proposed: For you must recollect, said he to Captain Seidlits, the present state of your sister's health; whatever you may *ultimately* resolve on, therefore, every altercation between you and Zeluco must be avoided at present, as you would avoid her destruction.

Their journey was agreed on. Mr. N—, who had talked of accompanying them, was prevented; but he supped in company with them and Signora Sporza at Madame de Seidlits's the night preceding their departure. Laura endeavoured to be cheerful, partly to hide her concern for the absence of Carlostein, and partly to convince her brother that she was not so unhappy as he imagined. The effort was superior to her strength

of mind; for, although she bid adieu to her brother with composure, she trembled and turned pale when Carlostein took leave of her. This was observed by Mr. N—, who stood near him; and it was not the first time that he had remarked Laura's partiality for the baron—which had no other effect on the generous mind of this gentleman, than increasing the regard he had for Carlostein. His own attachment to Laura had never exceeded the limits of friendship and high esteem; he had from their first acquaintance endeavoured to guard against a passion for a woman of a different country and religion from his own. Had Laura betrayed any symptoms of affection for him, it is more than probable his precautions would have been vain; for, when a man approves greatly of a woman's character and person, nothing is so likely to kindle approbation into love, as his imagining that love already exists within her breast towards him. But Mr. N— was too free from vanity, and had too much discernment, not to perceive that Laura's regard for him was unmixed with passion; and the same discernment enabled him to perceive that her attachment to Carlostein was pure love.

CHAPTER LXXXII.

"Her tongue bewitch'd as oddly as her eyes,
Less wit than mimic, more a wit than wise." POPE.

THE morning on which he left Naples, Captain Seidlits called once more on his sister. She had passed an unquiet night: dejection and sorrow were strongly marked on her countenance. Seidlits was affected in a manner unusual to him; while he embraced her, on taking leave, tears were in the eyes of both. Zélucó unexpectedly entered the room at that instant;

Seidlits was fretted, and confused at this intrusion ; he was abashed at being seen in tears, which he considered as a weakness unbecoming of a soldier. He saluted Zeluco in an embarrassed and abrupt manner, and hurried to Carlostein, with whom he immediately embarked for Sicily.

Laura continued weeping for a considerable time after her brother left the room, which prevented her remarking that Zeluco was displeased at the scene of which he had been an unexpected witness. His ill-humour was indeed so habitual, that it might have made little impression on her although she had. . . .

Carlostein and Seidlits being gone, and Laura far advanced in pregnancy, she never went abroad but for a short airing, or to pass a few hours with her mother, or at Signora Sporza's, where she sometimes met with Mr. N—, for whom she always felt and avowed great esteem.

Zeluco's time was almost entirely dedicated to Nerina, whose caprices increased in proportion to her influence over him, which, although they were generally directed to some interested point, were never carried further than his temper, the variations of which she attentively watched, could bear.

All her whims and caprices indeed were so completely under her command, and managed with such address, that what has disgusted many lovers with their mistresses, was by her made to operate as a stimulant to the passion of Zeluco when it seemed to languish.

She possessed the power of amusing in an extraordinary degree ; this she exercised sometimes in a manner that would have shocked a mind more delicate than that of Zeluco, but was admirably adapted to his ; he accordingly had frequent recourse to it against the dæmons of *ennui* and remorse, who haunted him alternately.

Nerina never mentioned Laura without the intention of turning her into ridicule, or insinuating something to her disadvantage, with frequent allusions to her altered shape, and the complaints incident to women in her situation.

Madame de Seidlits and Signora Sporza were also the frequent butts of her sarcasms ; the first she represented as an antiquated coquette, who, calling every auxiliary of the toilette in support of her faded charms, still attempted fresh conquests. I am told, said Nerina, that the ridiculous old lady stuns the ears of her yawning guests with the enumeration of her German admirers, landgraves, margraves, and barons without number. But, my dear sir, you ought really to give a hint to the imprudent old gentlewoman, not to indulge her vanity at the expense of her teeth ; for, you may depend upon it, the pronounciation of those horrid names is one cause of their being so very loose.

Signora Sporza she represented as a woman of intrigue, who, finding that two of her poor relations hung a little heavy on her hands, had fobbed off one of them upon him as a wife, and thus had secured a comfortable maintenance for both.

Her caricaturas were given with such exquisite pantomime and mimicry as might entertain those who were not acquainted with the characters of the persons she intended to ridicule, but must have shocked every person of candour who was.

In establishing the influence which Nerina wished to retain over Zeluco, the force of habit was now joined to the power of amusing. Having accustomed himself to go to her at certain hours, he knew not how to fill up those hours without her, and the desire of visiting her returned periodically. In the midst of apparent levity and seeming want of design, she observed a predetermined plan in most parts of her conduct to him ; and often when he imagined her entirely vacant,

or occupied in some very frivolous amusement, she was endeavouring to penetrate into his sentiments respecting certain subjects which she thought he might naturally wish to conceal from her. In consequence of this, it struck her, that notwithstanding Zeluco's passion for Laura was greatly cooled, and in spite of the pains she had taken to make her ridiculous in his eyes, yet he still retained a high esteem for her character. Indications of this, to the infinite mortification of Nerina, broke from him unintentionally sometimes, at the very instant when she was labouring to give him a very different impression. As Nerina was doubtful whether she herself had any hold of Zeluco by this sentiment of esteem, she was determined not to leave it in the possession of the woman whom she considered as her enemy. She secretly informed herself, therefore, of Laura's conduct and manner of passing her time, with a view to discover some ground upon which a fabric of falsehood injurious to the character of Laura might be raised; and after having for some time pursued these researches, by the means of her spies and other agents, without success, she at last formed one of the most horrid projects that ever entered into the head of a profligate woman. This shocking idea suggested itself to her in consequence of her having observed, that of late Zeluco displayed a particular dislike to Captain Seidlits, and of his mentioning to her something of his wife's grief at parting with her brother, and endeavouring to ridicule the pathetic manner in which they had taken leave of each other.

CHAPTER LXXXIII.

“ *Obliquâ invidiâ stimulisque agitabat amaris.*” VIRG.

IN due time, however, Laura was safely delivered of a son ; and as her husband seldom went near her, even to ask how she did, she had a very quick and complete recovery ; in little more than a month after her delivery, she was at church, where Nerina had the mortification of seeing her with undiminished beauty, and in all the grace of elegant simplicity. She could not but observe that Laura attracted the regard and commanded the admiration of all the spectators, while she herself, although ostentatiously dressed, was passed over without attention by the eyes of those who did not know her, and with looks of disdain by those who did. Had Nerina been aware of Laura's coming, she would have avoided such an occasion of comparison, well knowing that the sentiments of the spectators would be against her. This incident, however, redoubled her malice against Laura, particularly as it happened at a time when she was already fretted at Laura's having a son, and the apprehension that he might be the means of turning the heart of Zeluco from herself to his wife.

In prosecution of her plan, Nerina sometimes introduced the mention of Captain Seidlits, remarking with a careless and undesigning air, that he was considered by many people as the handsomest man in Naples.

Zeluco laughed at this, saying, that they were no great judges of male beauty who harboured such an opinion.

Yet in the opinion of most people, said Nerina, they are the *best* judges ; for you may think what you

please, but this is a very general notion among the ladies.

I did not know before, said Zeluco, that the proportions of a porter, and the strut of a Prussian serjeant, had been so much to their taste.

The blunt frankness of his manner is certainly better adapted to a camp than a drawing-room, rejoined Nerina; yet he undoubtedly is a very great favourite with the Neapolitan ladies; many of whom are thought to have cultivated the acquaintance of your wife, and sung her praises wherever there was a likelihood of their being repeated, for no other reason than that they might be on a good footing with him; for his great affection for his sister, and her influence with him, are pretty generally known.

These hints, however, had no other immediate effect than drawing from Zeluco some sarcasms against the person or address of Captain Seidlits.

In the mean time the infant increased in strength and beauty, and began to distinguish objects; and one day in particular, being dandled by the nurse, he smiled in the face of Zeluco. Hard of heart and unfeeling as he was, the smiles of his child melted him into tenderness.—He caught the infant in his arms, and, yielding to the power of nature, he indulged the affection of a father.

The pleasure of those sensations made so strong an impression, that he could not refrain from praising the beauty of the child in the presence of Nerina.

These praises from him were gall and wormwood to her; they made her for a moment forget her usual caution, and risk discovering her aim by precipitation.

The child must of course be strong and handsome, said she; for I hear he is the express image of Captain Seidlits.—Captain Seidlits! repeated Zeluco.

Yes, rejoined she with a careless air; nothing can

be more natural; the captain being *half*-brother to the child's mother.

I never remarked any such resemblance, said Zeluco, after a considerable pause.

No! said Nerina; then perhaps there is nothing in it; and all those who have been struck with the likeness must be mistaken.

Perceiving that her insinuation had taken effect, with an air of careless levity she turned the discourse to other subjects. Zeluco did not attempt to bring it back to this, but was at intervals thoughtful and musing through the rest of the evening: of this Nerina took no notice, but by gay and licentious songs, by mimicry and a thousand playful tricks, seemed intent on nothing but amusing herself and him.

The poison which this artful woman thus administered continued to ferment in the mind of Zeluco, and occupied his thoughts by day and night. A long familiarity with vice, and every species of profligacy, made that appear probable to him, which to a man of integrity would seem next to impossible.

He now called to his remembrance many circumstances in themselves frivolous, and which had made no impression when they occurred, but which now added strength to the horrid insinuations of Nerina—the mutual regard which had always appeared between Laura and her brother—their sequestered walks at the first arrival of Seidlits—his frequent visits to his sister when alone—her eagerness to have him instead of Carlostein in the carriage with her when they returned from Baia—their mutual tenderness when they last parted, the confusion which Seidlits had betrayed, and his abrupt departure on Zeluco's entering the room—and finally, the resemblance which he imagined had struck so many people between Captain Seidlits and the child. He also recollected, that al-

though his marriage took place five weeks before Seidlits arrived at Naples, yet the child was not born till near ten months after that period.

To those circumstances a ridiculous incident gave a degree of support, which, in the disturbed imagination of Zeluco, amounted to full proof.

He entered the nursery one day when he knew that Laura was not there: after talking a little to the nurse about the child, he had the weakness to say, for the insinuations of Nerina deprived him of cool reflection; he had the weakness to say to the nurse, Which of your lady's relations do you think this child resembles most?

La, sir, replied the nurse, why, his own father, sure.

Idiot, which of my wife's *relations*, I say? added Zeluco.

Laura's maid, who was present, wishing to correct the nurse's want of accuracy, interposed, saying, Your excellency, you know, is my lady's relation by marriage; though not by blood.

Who desired you to interfere, mistress? said Zeluco angrily; then turning to the nurse, he resumed: Do you not think he is like his uncle Captain Seidlits?

Jesu, Maria! cried the nurse, what makes your excellency think so?

Speak without evasion, woman, exclaimed Zeluco. Do you not think him like my wife's brother, Captain Seidlits?

O Lord, yes, an't please your excellency, cried the nurse, terrified at his manner; very like Captain Seidlits.

You have heard many people remark it, continued he; have you not?

A great many indeed, cried the nurse, who began now to think, that as Seidlits was a stately man, Zeluco was flattered by his child being thought like him:

besides, she was so flurried by his passionate manner of questioning, that she would have echoed back whatever question he could have asked.

But Laura's maid, who had been silenced at the beginning, could no longer restrain herself; for she had suspected Zeluco of jealousy ever since the adventure of the mirror; and imagined that his present questioning proceeded from the same motive.

How dare you utter such a horrid falsehood, cried the maid to the nurse, you base lying hussy, you!

It is you who are a lying hussy, retorted the nurse.

Who did you ever hear say such a thing? said the maid.

The nurse meant to injure Laura no more than the maid; but was so piqued at the maid's attack, and at her own veracity's being called in question, that she was ready to have supported the lie she had been frightened into, by her solemn oath, rather than have yielded the point to the maid.

Who did I ever hear say it? I have heard a hundred, said the nurse boldly.

A hundred! O wretch! cried the maid, turning up her eyes.

Ay, a thousand, ten thousand, continued the nurse.

You never did, you never could, exclaimed the maid; for the child resembles his own father.

That does not prevent his being exceedingly like Captain Seidlits, continued the nurse; and I am convinced, if he lives, that he will be as stately a man to the full.

Hold your scandalous tongue, vociferated the maid, you vile, worthless, lying wretch! the child resembles no man but my master.

He is ten thousand times liker Captain Seidlits, cried the nurse in a violent rage; and all the world think so, and say so.

All the world ! exclaimed the maid, lifting her eyes and arms.

Yes, all the world, repeated the nurse ; and if you will only call them into the room, they will tell you so to your face.

Zeluco withdrew, frowning and biting his lips. Madame de Seidlits with Laura came into the room soon after, and the altercation ceased.

CHAPTER LXXXIV.

The danger of vicious confidences—Indignation of Laura.

IN his present state of mind, Zeluco might naturally have questioned his confidential valet on this subject, to know what he had remarked respecting the behaviour of Laura and her brother ; but this man was no longer on the same footing with him that he had formerly been.

The valet had long beheld with indignation the influence which Nerina gained with his master, and endeavoured to counteract it by every means in his power ; but in besieging the heart and retaining the favour of a person of Zeluco's character, Nerina was a more skilful engineer than the valet ; besides, she made use of more powerful artillery than he was possessed of. Nerina, therefore, having completely gained the ascendancy, did not choose that Zeluco should have an old confidential servant about him, who was not devoted to her interest. She took every opportunity of disgusting the master with this man, while by many underhand means she endeavoured to render the man equally tired of the master ; pretending all the while that she was the valet's friend,

The fellow was not so easily duped as she imagined : convinced of her enmity, despairing of regaining the favour of Zeluco, and prompted by hatred to both, he waited secretly on Signora Sporza, gave her a circumstantial account of the pretended robbers who had attacked Laura and her on their return from Mount Vesuvius ; and assured her that he himself had charged the pistols with powder only ; but when it appeared from Zeluco's wound that one of them had been loaded with ball, he said, he recollected that in a small box in his master's writing-desk he had seen four pistol bullets the day immediately preceding the expedition ; and that on examining the same box at his return he found only two ; from which he concluded that Zeluco had secretly put the other brace into the pistol delivered to the servant, with an intention no doubt of murdering Signora Sporza, for he had given the servant particular directions to fire it in her face ;—that the wounding of Zeluco, therefore, was entirely accidental, owing to the hurry of the servant, and the balls having missed her.

The valet finished his narrative, by declaring that his motive for giving her this information was goodwill to Signora Sporza, against whom Zeluco still retained his ancient malice ; and a regard for Laura's safety, whose life, he said, was also in danger from a husband so very wicked, and who was entirely under the dominion of a woman more wicked, if possible, than himself.

After rewarding the man for his intelligence, Signora Sporza enjoined him to mention it to no other person, but to continue to behave to his master as usual, that there might be no suspicion of an understanding between the valet and her ; and to remain quite inactive till she had time to consult with her friends what measures should be adopted, of which the valet should

receive timely notice ; and he might rely on being still more liberally rewarded.

Signora Sporza communicated the whole of this man's narrative to Laura, whom it surprised and shocked exceedingly ; for, bad as her opinion was of her husband's disposition, she never had thought him capable of this degree of wickedness. She was filled likewise with indignation at the history of the sham attack by which her mother and she herself had been in some measure imposed upon, while she felt the greatest contempt for the man who was obliged to have recourse to such a pitiful trick, to throw a false lustre on his character.

Signora Sporza gave it as her opinion, that Laura should write to her brother, press his immediate return, throw herself into his protection, and separate for ever from her horrid husband ; adding, that his attachment to Nerina, and fear of Captain Seidlits, would induce him to agree to the separation on proper terms. But Laura, who laid little stress on what Signora Sporza meant by *terms*, felt herself under great difficulty in determining how to proceed ; for she thought her brother a very improper negotiator with Zeluco : and then, although she had no doubt of her husband's willingness to separate from her, she was afraid he might object to her having the child, from whom she could not without pain be absent, and whom she could not without horror abandon to the immediate care and future example of such a father.

After much reflection she wrote to her brother, expressing a desire of his speedy return, but not in the most urgent terms ; nor did she assign any particular reason, but requested that he would inclose his answer under cover to Signora Sporza. When Laura had finished her letter, she told her friend, that at her brother's return she would explain her views to him in the most

cautious manner, and in the presence of his friend the Baron Carlostein.

She determined at the same time, that in case her husband consented to leave the child even for a few years under her care after the separation took place, she would insist on Carlostein's leaving Naples; and if he refused, she resolved never after to admit his visits, even in the company of her mother or brother. She wished, however, that Carlostein should remain till every thing regarding the separation was settled, because he would be a check to the impetuosity of her brother; and also because she hoped that, through his influence with her husband, he would prevail on him to agree to the article nearest her heart, of leaving the child to her own care and management.

Self-sufficiency was no part of this amiable woman's character, however virtuous her inclinations were; she was conscious of a partiality for Carlostein, which convinced her that her safest course was to forgo the pleasure of his company entirely.

In the mean while the heart of Zeluco glowed with rage against Laura and Seidlits, and he resolved in his mind various plans of revenge; but as his wrath was deadly, he wished to adopt such an one as would at once satiate his vengeance and secure his safety.

The last he thought inconsistent with his making Nerina a confidante of his measures; for in spite of his partiality for her, and his believing that she had a great deal for him, he knew that this might not always be the case, and therefore he meditated some plan of revenge which required not her assistance, and which he meant to postpone till the return of Seidlits, being determined to involve both the brother and sister in the same ruin.

As he imagined, however, that he should need an accomplice for some part at least of the scheme, he began to soothe his valet, and behave in a more confi-

dential manner to him, with a view to conciliate matters; but this fellow, having been seduced into vice and not originally a villain, was not sufficiently a hypocrite to deceive his master. Zeluco perceived, through his affected obsequiousness, that the man was disobliged, and not to be trusted: although he had never been the confidant of his master in any thing of so much importance as that which now occupied his thoughts, yet Zeluco was conscious that this man was acquainted with certain parts of his conduct which he would not like to have revealed to the world. On observing therefore the mutinous state of his valet's mind, which he had overlooked before, he determined to keep him in as good humour as he could till Seidlits returned, and then send him on some pretext to Sicily, where he knew how to have him disposed of in a manner more agreeable to his own safety.

CHAPTER LXXXV.

“ He retir'd unseen,
To brood in secret on his gather'd spleen,
And methodize revenge.” DRYDEN.

THE mind of Zeluco being engrossed with these desperate purposes, he passed much of his time in solitude and meditation.

As he walked early one morning towards the hill of Pausilippo, he observed two men coming out of the grotto: they seemed conversing together when Zeluco first saw them; but as he approached, one fell behind the other, and a little to one side. As he who was most advanced drew near, Zeluco recognised him for an old acquaintance; his name was Bertram, the son of a clergyman of Geneva, who, from a spirit of adventure to which the natives of that city are much ad-

dicted, had travelled into Spain, to visit a relation who was secretary to an ambassador at the court of Madrid, through whose interest this young man got a commission in the Spanish service. Zeluco had been several times in company with him at Madrid; and particularly once a short time before Zeluco himself left that city, he had met Bertram at a gaming-house, and stript him of all his money: this circumstance served to make each recollect the other. After the usual compliments,—You were very unfortunate the last night we were in company together, said Zeluco.

It was thought so, answered Bertram.

I am much afraid that what I won put you to much inconveniency, rejoined Zeluco.

Such inconveniencies must sometimes be expected by those who play, said Bertram.

You have quitted the Spanish service, I presume? resumed Zeluco.

I have, said the other.

You do not think of leaving Naples soon?

It is not in my power to leave it immediately, said Bertram.

How so?

Why, continued Bertram with a smile, you find me in the condition in which you left me—without money;—in short, I have overshot my credit, and I now wait for a small remittance to enable me to leave this place.

Zeluco then told him he should be happy to accommodate him in whatever sum he needed: I am engaged this morning, added he, but if you will walk a little after it is dusk in the square before the palace, I will soon join you, and conduct you to a place where we may have a cheerful glass together: I am impatient to hear your adventures since we parted.

Bertram promised to meet him at the time and place appointed. They then parted, and each continued his

walk; but Zeluco immediately turning, said to Bertram, You had best not mention my name, nor hint to any person that we are acquainted: the reason of this caution you will know hereafter; but in the mean time, I can only tell you, it will not be in my power to serve you as I intend, if you do.

Bertram assured him he would not, and they again took leave of each other.

Zeluco remembered that this Bertram was considered, at the time he knew him, as a young fellow of desperate fortune and devoted to gaming, but respected on account of the presence of mind and intrepidity with which he had extricated himself from a very hazardous adventure, in which he was involved before Zeluco arrived at Madrid, and which was much talked of at the time. Zeluco had heard no more of him after he himself left Spain, but imagined he was ruined by play, and had now become an adventurer living by his wits, and ready for any desperate enterprise in which there was a likelihood of bettering his fortune. What added strength to his conjectures was, his having remarked the man who was in conversation with Bertram before Zeluco joined him: this man Zeluco was persuaded he had seen with a chain around his leg, working among the malefactors at Casserta; which very suspicious circumstance, and the fellow's retiring and standing aloof, while Bertram and he conversed, convinced Zeluco that his old acquaintance was just such a person as he was in want of. He had not fully determined in what manner he should employ him, but a variety of disjointed ideas of vengeful import floated in his imagination; and he much wished to attach to his views a man such as he took Bertram to be, needy, daring, and profligate; but he knew that the aid he expected from him was of a nature which made it highly expedient, both for his own safety and that of his auxiliary, that their acquaintance with

each other should not be known ; for which reason he was impatient till they separated, lest they should be observed conversing.

CHAPTER LXXXVI.

“ ——— Thou hast been
 As one, in suffering all, that suffers nothing ;
 A man, that fortune's buffets and rewards
 Hast ta'en with equal thanks ; and blest are those,
 Whose wit and judgement are so well commingled
 That they are not a pipe for fortune's finger
 To sound what stop she please.” SHAKESPEARE.

At the time appointed, Bertram walked before the palace gate, and was soon joined by Zeluco, wrapped in a Portuguese cloak, who, desiring him to follow, conducted him through various winding alleys, to the door of a detached house, which, on ringing a bell, seemed to open of itself, for nobody appeared ; but Zeluco, after carefully shutting the door, led Bertram into a room commodiously fitted up, with a cold collation and various kinds of wine on the table.

This apartment Zeluco kept for the purpose of entertaining such friends as it was inexpedient to invite to his own house. Nerina and others had frequently met him here:—the servants were previously instructed what they should provide ; and the guests were served with whatever they needed, by the means of a turning cupboard, such as is used in convents.

I hate being incommoded with servants, said Zeluco, particularly on an occasion of this kind, when I am to enjoy a confidential conversation with an old friend. I have therefore taken care that no domestic shall interrupt us.—Pray help yourself to what you like.

After they had supped and drunk a few glasses of

wine—I am much afraid, said Zeluco, that the four-hundred dollars I won from you at Madrid put you to great inconveniency, for I remember I was afterwards informed you were in debt at that time.

I was indeed, said Bertram.

Well then, I hope you soon after won double the sum? said Zeluco.

I have never played since, answered Bertram.

Never! cried Zeluco.

Never, replied Bertram.

How did you contrive to pay your debts then? said Zeluco.

A brother officer, hearing of my ill luck, paid me an old debt which I had despaired of;—this helped me greatly;—living on half my pay for several months did the rest: at last I had the pleasure of paying all my debts to the last farthing.

It is next to impossible, said Zeluco, for an officer in the Spanish service, of the rank you then were, to live on his full-pay; I cannot conceive how you contrived to exist on the half.

More difficult things may be performed by those who are resolved to be just, replied Bertram; I was under the necessity of living very poorly, to be sure; but if I had not, some of my creditors, who were poor tradespeople, must have starved.

And what if they had? thought Zeluco,—and then saying aloud, So, to prevent their starving, you half-starved yourself?

Not quite so, signor, replied Bertram; though to be sure my table was not sumptuous.

This must have been a very cruel course of equity, however, said Zeluco.

I have been repaid by the satisfaction it has afforded me since, replied Bertram.

I dare swear you often cursed me in your heart, said Zeluco.

A curse has sometimes escaped my lips, said Bertram; but I do not remember my having ever cursed any body in my heart.

I should forgive you if you had.—The loss of four hundred dollars to one in your circumstances was a dreadful misfortune, added Zeluco.

I hope they were of service to you, said Bertram; for their loss was one of the luckiest things that ever happened to me. I was obliged to pinch so hard to make it up, that I have thought myself in affluence ever since.

You are a philosopher, said Zeluco, and bear misfortunes with great fortitude.

I have hardly ever had any to bear, said Bertram.

I am surprised to hear you say so, rejoined Zeluco; because I was told that the four hundred dollars which I won, was but the conclusion of a very persevering run of ill-fortune. I heard you lost near seven thousand dollars in the space of a month:

Thereabout, said Bertram.

And what in the devil's name do you call that? said Zeluco.—Surely a man in the situation you then were, who loses such a sum in the course of a month's play, must think himself very unfortunate.

Not if he previously win it all in the course of a week's play, replied Bertram, which was precisely my case.—I could never have had the misfortune to lose seven thousand dollars, if I had not first had the good fortune to win them.

That is not the usual way in which men calculate their own misfortunes, said Zeluco.

It is the fair way, however, rejoined Bertram; for the most fortunate man that ever existed will be proved to be unfortunate, if you throw out all the lucky incidents of his life, and leave the unlucky behind; but I had one piece of good fortune which I have not mentioned.

What was that? said Zeluco.

Out of the first thousand dollars, I remitted seven hundred to my father.

The devil you did! cried Zeluco.

Yes, said Bertram, I thank Heaven, I put that out of the power of chance.

The old boy, I hope, repaid you three-fold? said Zeluco.

Ay, ten-fold, replied Bertram; for he informed me by the next post, that it had enabled him to clear off some debts that distressed him exceedingly.

But after your loss with me, said Zeluco, I am surprised you never again tried your fortune at play.

It required all my fortitude to abstain from it, said Bertram; for although deep play is little known among the citizens of Geneva, I was early led into it by a young Englishman with whom I was intimate before I left that city. I continued to play with uncommon success after I went to Madrid. This propensity grew into a passion, and I was thoughtless and unjust enough to risk in play with you the money which I had appropriated for the discharge of what I owed to tradespeople and others, for which as I felt a degree of remorse which I never before experienced, I determined to effect the discharge of my debts by the most rigid œconomy: yet I must own I was often strongly tempted to try my fortune once more at play; for it occurred to me that by a few successful throws of the dice I might abridge many lingering months of œconomy; but I reflected on the other hand, that in case I should lose, it would be at the expense of those poor creditors whom, by a strict adherence to my plan of œconomy, it was in my power to pay.—While I was balancing this matter in my mind, I received a letter from my father, which decided the point. I paid the money I had in my hands equally among my creditors, and directly after began my course of œco-

mony, in which I persevered till I was entirely free from debt; and I have never played nor been in debt since.

Your father's letter must have contained very forcible reasoning, said Zeluco, to produce such an effect.

It contained a recapitulation of those principles which he had instilled into my mind in my childhood; an adherence to which has been the source of all the comfort I have had in life, and from which I never deviated, in the smallest degree, without remorse.

I should be glad to see this powerful epistle, or hear what you can recollect of it, said Zeluco.

I am sorry I have it not about me, said Bertram; for there is a peculiar energy in my father's style to which my memory cannot do justice. The letter in question was written in consequence of his having heard that I was patronized by a certain man in power, from whom I had reason to expect promotion: from this he took occasion to remind me, that the favour of men was precarious, and often guided by caprice; that they might smile upon me to-day, and neglect me to-morrow, however uniformly zealous I might be to retain their good-will; but he earnestly entreated me to make it my chief study to find favour in the eyes of my Creator, in whom there is no variableness, nor shadow of turning.

Your father was a clergyman, no doubt? said Zeluco, stifling a laugh.

He was, replied Bertram, and there never was a worthier.

But did he give you any hint how you were to become a favourite? I mean, continued Zeluco, besides the old way by devotion and religious ceremonies.

My father's devotion lay in his heart, said Bertram, and was little embarrassed with ceremonies.

Well then, continued Zeluco, how were you to carry your point?

By the duties of humanity and benevolence to my fellow-creatures, and by the most strict integrity: he recommended particularly that I should listen to the dictates of conscience, which he called the voice of God, and which, even in this life, punishes and rewards in a certain degree, according to our conduct. If ever,—continued Bertram, giving the words of his father's letter,—If ever, my son, you should feel a propensity to do an unfair thing, overcome it immediately, for no earthly consideration can make it your interest. —Heaven and earth shall pass away, but this truth shall remain, *Whatsoever a man soweth that he shall reap.* Therefore, my dear Bertram, never, O never, be such a fool as to be a knave.

Bertram repeated this part of the letter with unusual fervour; and Zeluco, who was disposed to turn the whole into ridicule, had certain sensations which spoilt his inclination to mirth. He remained for some time in a kind of reverie; then rousing himself, he looked at Bertram, saying, Well, sir, what happened next?

I told you, resumed Bertram, that before I read this admonition, my conscience had been whispering that it was not quite fair in me to risk the money which the poor tradespeople stood so much in need of; yet my avarice or love of play, whichever you please, was endeavouring to silence these whispers with all the sophistry they could muster. But, I thank God, my father's letter coming to the aid of conscience, I had the strength to act as I did.

By this time Zeluco plainly perceived that his old acquaintance was a very different kind of man from what he had expected, and would by no means suit his purpose; yet he felt a strong curiosity to know the whole of his history. Zeluco therefore pursuing his inquiries; Upon the whole, however, resumed he, you must have passed your time but uncomfortably in the Spanish service?

Forgive me, replied Bertram : after I had paid my debts, my time was spent very cheerfully : my mind was free from self-reproach ; I possessed the friendship of some officers of sense and honour ; I enjoyed good health and good spirits, for I so contrived matters, that my hours never hung on my hands, but were rather too short for my employments ; at night I fell asleep, satisfied with the manner I had passed the day, and rose every morning in spirits to perform my duty, and eager to improve my mind.

In the course of Zeluco's inquiries, Bertram informed him, that after remaining some years in the Spanish service, a brother of his mother's had made him an advantageous proposal, which would have enabled him to live comfortably in his own country, to which he had for some time felt a strong desire of returning ; his father, and other relations, having written very pressing letters to that purpose.

You disposed of your commission, and returned accordingly ? said Zeluco

I could not immediately indulge my own desire, nor yield to the entreaties of my friends, replied Bertram ; because there was a rumour of war, which some time after was verified ; so I thought myself bound in honour to remain with the regiment, which soon was sent on active service.

The extraordinary expense to which officers are put during war, would bear hard on you, who had no resource but your pay ? said Zeluco.

Very fortunately I had studied mathematics and fortification at Geneva, and was frequently employed as an engineer, for which I received additional pay : this enabled me, replied Bertram, to live as well as other officers of my rank, and to remit a small sum of money to a female cousin of mine at Geneva, who had fallen under the displeasure of her other relations.

This *cousin* was young and handsome, no doubt ? said Zeluco.

On the contrary, said Bertram, she was an elderly woman, who never had been handsome, but had made a rash marriage, disapproved of by all her relations.

What then interested you so much in her ? said Zeluco ; her mental accomplishments and virtue, no doubt ?

Her accomplishments, poor woman, replied Bertram, never were conspicuous, and rumour was by no means favourable to her reputation in the other particular : in short, her conduct afforded such just grounds to her nearest relations to abandon her, that I thought myself bound to befriend her, because her other friends were either too angry or too much ashamed of her to afford her any assistance.

But pray, said Zeluco, when did you quit the Spanish service ?

At the peace, replied the other, when our regiment was ordered home.

I remember to have heard that one of the captains of your regiment died on the passage ; I suppose you were promoted to the company ?

As I was the oldest lieutenant in the regiment, and had received two wounds in the service, my friends flattered me I should ; but it was given to a young officer, nephew to a grandee of Spain.

That was hard, said Zeluco.

Not particularly so, said Bertram : men of family have been allowed advantages in all services ; it can hardly be expected that they will serve otherwise ; and if this young gentleman had been promoted to a company in any other regiment, it would have been equally hard on the oldest subaltern of that regiment.

But probably this was a person of little or no merit ? said Zeluco.

Forgive me, replied Bertram ; he is a very spirited young man, and I am convinced, from what I know of him, will prove an excellent officer.

I should have thought it damned hard, however, had I been in your place, that another should carry away the whole reward due to me.

He did not carry away the whole, said Bertram ; for my behaviour on several occasions was publicly approved of by the general, and praised by the whole army ; my worthy father, and all my friends at Geneva, were informed of it, and rejoiced at the intelligence : besides, I have the approbation of my own mind, I am conscious of having been ever faithful to my trust, and of having done my duty as a soldier. I had the happiness of being loved by the soldiers as well as the officers of the regiment ; many of the poor fellows were in tears when I left them. You must be sensible that this is a very pleasing reward, and occasions delightful sensations,

CHAPTER LXXXVII.

“ A sight of horror to the cruel wretch,
Who all day long in sordid pleasure roll'd,
Himself an useless load, has squander'd vile,
Upon his scoundrel train, what might have cheer'd
A drooping family of modest worth.
But to the generous still improving mind,
That gives the hopeless heart to sing for joy,
Diffusing kind beneficence around ;—
'To him the long review of order'd life
Is inward rapture.”

THOMSON.

As Zeluco had never felt any of the delightful sensations which Bertram alluded to, he became a little impatient at this observation. Well, well, said he, all this is mighty fine ; but pray, my good sir, what man was

he whom I saw in conversation with you this morning, a little before I joined you?

That man, replied Bertram, smiling, is just liberated from the galleys; he is my only attendant: if my suite be not numerous, signor, you must allow that it is select.

Liberated from the galleys! cried Zeluco with affected surprise.

Yes, he was condemned to the galleys or to hard labour for life; it comes to the same thing: his last employment was at the royal works of Casserta with other slaves, some Christian, some Mahometan.

But how came *you* connected with him? said Zeluco.

You shall hear, replied Bertram. Having quitted the Spanish service, and returned to my native city of Geneva, I lived in the most agreeable manner; and this poor man, a Savoyard by birth, was my footman: he is a good-natured creature, though not very clever, and I sought no other: in the mean time, a worthless fellow, a Piedmontese, came to Geneva, and, filling my servant's head with many fine stories concerning Italy, persuaded him to quit my service, and accompany him to that country, whither this Piedmontese was returning from France. They travelled together to Milan; where failing in their endeavours to get into service, and their money being exhausted, they enlisted in an Austrian regiment; but had not been quite a month in this situation, when the Piedmontese was recognised by two Neapolitans, as a person who had been imprisoned above three years before at Naples, on an accusation of robbery with assassination, but had made his escape from prison. An information to this purpose being formally made, the Piedmontese was taken into custody, and my poor Antonio, who had accompanied him to Milan, and enlisted at the same time, was seized and committed to prison as his ac-

complice; for the witnesses declared there had been two men engaged in the robbery, although only one had been apprehended at Naples.

On a requisition by the Neapolitan resident at Milan, they were both sent to Naples; but the Piedmontese had the dexterity to make his escape on the journey, and Antonio alone was brought prisoner to this city. The presumptions against him were greatly strengthened by the circumstance of a seal having been found in his pocket, which it was proved had belonged to the murdered person.

It was in vain that the wretched Antonio told the manner he had made acquaintance with the Piedmontese;—that he had been in service at Geneva at the time the murder was committed;—that he had bought the seal of his companion who had escaped; with many other particulars, all of them true, but none of them credited by his judges: however, as there was no direct proof of his having perpetrated the crime, he was not convicted capitally, but was condemned to a punishment in most people's eyes more severe, hard labour for life.

The person who had been robbed and murdered was a man much esteemed on account of his character and manners; by his untimely death, a respectable family were in danger of being reduced from affluence to poverty: this created a general sympathy. The murder was supposed to have been accompanied with circumstances peculiarly cruel; the last excited as much indignation as the former did compassion.

The more atrocious a crime is, there certainly is the less probability that the individual who happens to be taken up on suspicion of having perpetrated it is really guilty; for this plain reason, that a much greater proportion of mankind are capable of committing a little crime than a very great one: but it happens frequently, that the just indignation against the crime is

rashly and unjustly applied against whoever is first accused; and the very circumstance of uncommon atrocity, which ought to render us difficult in the admission of the charge, is sometimes the cause of a precipitate and unjust condemnation. This seems to have been the case in the instance of poor Antonio.

He has since told me, that he wrote to me immediately after receiving his hard sentence: but whether from the letter's having been neglected by the person to whom he gave it to be put into the post-office, or from whatever other cause, it never came to my hand; but after he had been several months in this situation, I received a letter which gave me the first intelligence of his misfortune: it was written in all the simplicity of truth; to convey an idea of the horrors of his fate required not the aid of eloquence. I am condemned, said he, to slavery for my whole life, on account of a murder committed at Naples when I was in your service at Geneva.

The blockhead deserved to suffer, said Zeluco, for his folly in leaving your service, where he was happier than he deserved.

The poor fellow, replied Bertram, made that very observation in his letter; but surely, sir, his sufferings were too severe for a piece of levity, or that love of variety so natural to us all. I was so shocked with the idea of an innocent man's being unjustly condemned, that my first impulse was to set out immediately for Naples; but on my mentioning this to some of my friends, they assured me, that an attestation of the man's having been in my service at the time of the murder, and for a considerable space before and after, would be sufficient to procure his liberty. This was immediately drawn up in due form, and sent to Naples, inclosed in a letter to an eminent lawyer of that city.

But Antonio's dismal situation haunted me day and night. I could not walk into the fields without think-

ing on his being chained to endless labour—nor eat a meal without reflecting on the scanty morsel moistened with tears on which the wretched Antonio fed—nor lie down in my bed without dreaming I beheld the unhappy man stretched on the damp pavement of a dungeon. Alas! cried I, is it acting up to the divine precept, *Do as you would be done by*, to trust the liberty and life of an innocent man to a letter, which may have miscarried or prove ineffectual? If I go myself, it will be in my power to identify the man, and by a thousand circumstances make his innocence so evident, that I must infallibly procure his immediate liberty. These and similar reflections ingrossed my mind entirely. I was by no means satisfied with my own conduct; and you know, sir, continued Bertram, that when a man stands condemned at the bar of his own conscience, it is of small importance to his happiness to be thought innocent by all the rest of the world: for my own part, I felt myself so unhappy on this occasion, that in compassion to myself, as well as to Antonio, I set out for this city before I could receive any answer to my letter.

Most fortunate it was for Antonio and for me that I did so. The lawyer to whom my letter was addressed was gone to Messina, and my letter disregarded. I found poor Antonio at hard labour at Casserta, among a number of wretches against whom crimes had been *proved* similar to that of which he was *presumed* guilty.

To paint the poor fellow's joy and gratitude at sight of me, continued Bertram, is not in my power; but I did not find it so easy a matter to procure his liberty as I expected: I had more difficulty in prevailing on some to whom I addressed myself, only to hear my story, than I thought I should have had in obtaining the whole of my object; and when they had heard it, they seemed to think it of less importance than I ever

before believed one human creature's happiness could possibly be to another.

None of them expressed any doubt of the man's innocence, yet few would give themselves the least trouble to get him relieved : they shrugged up their shoulders, said it was hard on the man, but no business of theirs. I am convinced, sir, that it would shock you, were I to describe every circumstance of the savage hardness of heart and selfish indifference which were discovered by some. Well, I wish those gentlemen much good of their insensibility. I dare say it may have saved them some unpleasant moments, which I, and I doubt not you, sir, have felt ! But of this I am convinced, that when I succeeded at length in procuring Antonio's liberty, my satisfaction was little inferior to his ; and I have no doubt but it will afford me pleasure to my last hour : and so, sir, I leave you to judge whether or not I have reason to rejoice in having made this jaunt to Naples.

Zeluco's eyes were fixed on the ground during the latter part of Bertram's narrative ; and he continued silent and pensive for some time after it was finished. His reflections seemed not of a pleasing nature, several sighs escaped from him ; if he then threw back a glance on his own past life, he would discover no cheering ray reflected from acts of benevolence to brighten the gloomy retrospect, no cordial-drop of self-approbation to comfort his drooping spirits.

I fear my long story has tired you, sir, said Bertram : here is to your good health, added he, filling his glass.

I pledge you with all my heart, said Zeluco, endeavouring to shake off reflection ; in which however he did not succeed, till he had almost entirely drowned thought in repeated bumpers.

In the course of their conversation, Zeluco renewed the offer he had made in the morning, of furnishing

Bertram with what money he had occasion for, till the letter of credit which he expected should arrive; but Bertram assured him that he was already accommodated. The fact was, Buchanan having accidentally heard that a servant had been redeemed from slavery by his master, had gone and conversed with the man himself, from whom he heard all the particulars; of which he was so full, that on returning home he entered into the room where Mr. N— was alone, saying, O sir, I have something to tell you, which I am sure will do your heart good to hear!—He then gave him the whole story as he had received it from the Savoyard, concluding with this reflection: I really do imagine, sir, that there is something in the air of mountainous countries exceedingly favourable to kindness of heart.—I have heard several travellers declare that they had met with more hospitality in a short tour in the Highlands of Scotland, than in their journeys over all Flanders and the Low Countries, although the last are as full of populous towns as the former is of mountains.

This Bertram is a citizen of Geneva, whose territories are not mountainous, said Mr. N—, smiling.

Your honour will be pleased to remember, replied Buchanan, that Geneva is situated by a fine lake, just as the village of Buchanan is by Loch Lomond; and there are mountains at no great distance from both.

I had forgot that, said Mr. N—; but I am so charmed with the behaviour of this man, that I should like to be acquainted with him, although it could be proved against him that he had been born above a hundred miles from any lake or mountain.

Mr. N— went the very next morning to call on Bertram, and found him as he returned from his first interview with Zeluco, telling him, he had done himself the honour of waiting on him expressly to solicit the acquaintance of a man of so much worth. In the

course of their conversation, Mr. N— discovered that he had been well acquainted with Bertram's father when he himself had been at Geneva, and when Bertram was in the Spanish service. Mr. N— at the same time told Bertram, that he had received many civilities from his relations, and spoke of his father in such terms of regard as brought the tears into the son's eyes; who, although he at first had declined Mr. N—'s offer, now told him he would with pleasure make use of his banker for what money he might need, till his own credit should arrive.

Zeluco seemed disappointed on finding that he was anticipated in fixing an obligation on Bertram. He asked, Whether he had mentioned to Mr. N— any thing of their present meeting?

I fancy, sir, said Bertram, a little gravely, you have forgot that I promised not to mention my being acquainted with you to any body.

Zeluco begged his excuse, saying, he *had* forgot; adding, that it would be no longer necessary to conceal their acquaintance, and invited him to dine with him the following day.

Bertram expressed no desire of knowing Zeluco's reason for his former wish of concealment, or for the secret manner in which they had met. He perceived that Zeluco began to be affected by the wine, and imputed his loss of memory, and his neglecting to explain this, to that circumstance.

CHAPTER LXXXVIII.

"Lentus in meditando ubi prorupisset, tristibus dictis atrocior facta conjungebat."

TACIT.

THE suspicions which rankled in the breast of Zeluco would perhaps have gradually lost their force, and at

length died away, had they not been carefully cherished and kept alive by the watchful malice of Nerina. She adapted and linked together every accidental circumstance in such an artful manner, that, to the disturbed fancy of Zeluco, they formed a chain of irrefragable force; the absurd answers of the nurse to his questions, and the passionate interference of Laura's maid, which of themselves had made a strong impression on his mind, received additional strength from the comments of Nerina.

As the transactions of his past life often presented themselves to Zeluco's mind in painful review, it is probable, that the suspicions which, with a vindictive spirit, he had formerly raised in the breast of the Portuguese, now afforded him no very agreeable reflection; and the anguish which Zeluco himself felt, from the idea of his not being the father of Laura's child, seems a just retribution for the thorns which, on a similar occasion, he had planted in the breast of another.

Laura observed an increasing gloom on the countenance of her husband, and was shocked and terrified at the looks he sometimes threw on his child. She mentioned this to Signora Sporza, who, not having observed it herself, persuaded Laura, that what alarmed her proceeded entirely from her viewing the looks and actions of Zeluco through a medium of additional gloom ever since the information given by the valet.

A packet of letters arrived from Captain Seidlits, in which was one addressed to Mr. N—, one to Signora Sporza, and one to Madame de Seidlits, but none to Laura. This omission was a circumstance of new suspicion in the eyes of Zeluco, who was with Madame de Seidlits when she opened the cover of the letters. He suspected, what was really the case, that there was a letter for Laura inclosed in that for Signora Sporza; and had he been without a witness, it is not impossible but he might have had the meanness to

have broken open the letter. Madame de Seidlitz sent it by her own servant to Signora Sporza, and Zeluco remained on the watch to observe whether Signora Sporza did not send or bring a letter to Laura. She thought proper to bring it herself, and Zeluco met her as she was going to Laura's apartment. He accosted her with assumed cheerfulness, said he was going to drive out for a few miles; and, being persuaded she would not accept, he invited her to accompany him in the carriage; which she having declined, he bade her adieu, saying, he would return within a few hours; and immediately went out of the house, but returned through the garden to his own apartment, by a door of which he alone had the key, and from thence passed unobserved into a small room adjoining that in which Laura and Signora Sporza were conversing. His design was to discover whether his suspicions regarding the letter were well founded, and to hear what passed between the two friends, when they thought themselves unobserved, and him at a distance.

Zeluco could not distinctly hear every word that passed; but from what he did hear, he understood that a letter had come from Captain Seidlitz to Laura;—that the captain with his friend Carlostein would arrive very soon;—that Laura earnestly wished to be separated from him as soon as possible, provided she should be permitted to take her child with her;—and at last he heard Laura with a raised voice distinctly pronounce these words: “O my dearest brother, had you arrived a few weeks sooner at Naples, I should never have been united to this mean perfidious man!”

Zeluco was so transported with rage on hearing this, that he mechanically drew his stiletto, and was on the point of bursting into the room and stabbing his wife, when hearing the voice of Signora Sporza he was again tempted to listen.

Signora Sporza endeavoured to soothe and quiet the

mind of Laura by admonitions to patience and fortitude, representing that she would in a very short time have the pleasure of embracing her brother, who would unquestionably fall on means to free her for ever from her odious tyrant; reminding her at the same time, that it was of the utmost importance to manage the temper of the monster, till such time as he should agree to deliver the child to her care.

She then told Laura, that she was obliged to make a few morning visits, but would see her in the evening; and took her leave. Zeluco remained for some time boiling with indignation in his listening-place, which he left at last, and came round to the room in which Laura was. She had just received her child from the nurse when Zeluco entered.—He made a motion with his hand for the nurse to retire; which she directly did, leaving the child in Laura's arms.

Zeluco walked backward and forward for some time with a morose and gloomy countenance, without speaking or seeming to take notice of either.

As this was nothing unusual, Laura paid no attention to it, nor did she remark the dreadful humour he was in, till turning quick upon her, he said, with a fierce look, Don't you think that child very like his father, madam?

He is much too young, replied she, for his features to announce any particular likeness.

I have been told, said he, that he already displays a most striking resemblance to your brother.

I am happy to hear it, said Laura, caressing the child.

Have you the audacity to say so, madam, and to my face? exclaimed Zeluco furiously.

What is it that you mean, sir? cried Laura, rising from her seat; for the child screamed, being alarmed at Zeluco's loud and threatening voice.

Peace—incestuous bastard! exclaimed he, grasping the infant by the throat with frantic violence.

Ah; monster! you murder your child! cried Laura agonized with terror, and endeavouring to remove his distracted hand.

It was removed too late;—the child never breathed more.

The wretched mother sunk again upon her seat; her soul suspended between hope and despair, while her imploring eyes were riveted on the face of the infant, which lay breathless on her knee.

The women hearing a confused noise, rushed into the room:—every means were used for the recovery of the child;—all were fruitless.

When it became certain that there was no hope, Laura, yielding to despair, clasped the dead infant to her bosom, crying, O my child! my child! take thy miserable mother with thee to the grave! and she directly fell senseless on the floor.

The child's body being removed, Laura was carried to her bed in a state of insensibility.

CHAPTER LXXXIX.

“Notre repentir n'est pas tant un regret du mal que nous avons fait, qu'une crainte de celui qui nous en peut arriver.”

ROCHEFOUCAULT.

WHEN it appeared that the child was irrecoverably gone, Zeluco's jealous phrensy dwindled into personal fear, lest he should be called to account for the murder of the child. To the attendants, therefore, he made a great display of concern for the child's death, and still more for the consequences it might have on the health of his beloved wife. And when Signora Sporza

returned, he took care to meet her, and informed her, before the nurse and other domestics, with an air of infinite sorrow, that the dear infant had been seized on a sudden in a most unexpected manner with convulsions while he was in his mother's arms; and that, in spite of all the means which could be used to save his life, the poor child had expired; on which Laura had immediately fainted, and nothing but his concern for her had prevented him from being in the same state; that she still continued very much disturbed, for which reason it was highly proper to keep her quiet and secluded from all company; for the sight of any body, or asking her questions in her present situation, might have very bad consequences.

Signora Sporza did not listen to this representation without showing symptoms of impatience; and when he finished, she made no answer, but that she must immediately see her friend.

You cannot think of it at present, my dear madam, said Zeluco.

I must see my friend immediately, said she, moving towards the apartment in which Laura was.

Good heavens! cried he, stepping between her and the door, you would not intrude upon her sorrow at such a moment?

She never thought my visits intrusion, replied Signora Sporza; I must see her, sir.—Allow me to pass. Zeluco was apprehensive that Laura would immediately accuse him of the child's death, or allow some expression to fall from her that would unfold the manner of it; he was very desirous therefore that no person should be admitted to her till he himself had tried to persuade her that the infant's death was accidental; or, if he failed in that, he hoped he should, by expressing great grief and contrition for the involuntary movement his hand had made, be able to prevail on Laura to promise never to mention what she had seen. Had

he once obtained such a promise, he knew that he should be safe, being well acquainted with her inviolable attachment to her word. He strove therefore by every argument he could devise to prevail on Signora Sporza to postpone her visit; but all his arguments were lost on her. Signora Sporza's impatience to see her friend augmented in proportion to the earnestness he showed to prevent it; she became louder and more violent in her manner, and Zeluco was obliged to yield the point, informing her at the same time, that he was much afraid that Laura's senses were disturbed by the shock of such an unexpected accident.

Zeluco did not know when he made this assertion that it was true; he even dreaded that it was not; but he threw it out, that less stress might be laid on any expression which, in the agony of grief, might fall from Laura. The disturbance of Laura's senses, which he asserted at random, had in reality taken place.

Some time after her being carried to bed, as was mentioned, she showed signs of life, but of no distinct recollection: after remaining a few minutes in this state, she relapsed into a complete stupor, from which, after some interval, she recovered as before, having only a confused impression that something dreadful had happened, but without being able to recover her scattered senses so far as to remember what it was.

When Signora Sporza came to the door of Laura's bed chamber, she heard her in a wild and plaintive tone, saying, *Alas! where have I been? What has happened? Can no body tell? Do all your brains turn round,—do your hearts fail like mine?* She then fell back into her former stupor.

While she lay in this state, the attendants informed Signora Sporza that their mistress repeated nearly the same expressions as often as she recovered from those fits of fainting.

Signora Sporza seated herself at Laura's bed-side,

with her eyes fixed on her face and watching all her movements. As soon as she perceived her recovering, she took hold of her hand, and addressing her in the most soothing and affectionate tone of voice, How do you do, my lovely friend? said she.

Laura stared her wildly in the face for some time without speaking, and then cried, O! is it you? Are you come at last?—Yes, my dear, I am come, replied Signora Sporza.—But do you know, said Laura, what has happened?—I am very sorry, replied Signora Sporza, for what has happened.—Pray, tell me, cried Laura, what it is? None of them will tell me; but I am sure it is something very sad; for see, they all look sad and mournful, and you are sorrowful too, and my poor heart is sad, although I know not wherefore—but my head turns so!——

Madame de Seidlits, by the indiscretion of a servant, had been told of the infant's death, with the additional circumstance that Laura herself was dying.

Half frantic at the intelligence, she hurried from her own house to that of Zeluco; and without listening to the accounts he endeavoured to give her, or regarding the opposition that was made to her appearance suddenly before her daughter, she rushed into her bed-chamber, exclaiming, My child! my child! where is my child?

At this expression Laura started, sat up in the bed, and seemed in some degree to recover her recollection; with one hand opposing her mother's embrace, while with a solemn tone of voice and sternness of regard, most unlike her natural sweetness, she pronounced, *My child is gone for ever!*—the fiend grasped him; after which she screamed, and fell back again insensible on the pillow. When she recovered, she uttered many expressions seemingly incoherent, but which bore some relation to the act which had produced her disorder. Had any person been witness to

the child's murder, he would easily have perceived that Laura's most incoherent expression glanced at that deed; but as nobody had, all imagined they were quite unmeaning, and proceeding from the disorder which the child's unexpected death had produced.

Madame de Seidlits, having recovered in some degree the first shock she felt on perceiving the melancholy state in which her daughter was, summoned all her fortitude, that she might be enabled to assist Signora Sporza in soothing, supporting, and comforting Laura.

A physician having arrived, was, according to the orders given by Zeluco, introduced to his apartment before he was permitted to see Laura. Zeluco, with ostentatious sorrow, told him of the child's being suddenly carried off by a convulsion fit; that there was reason to apprehend this sad event had disturbed the senses of his wife, as she had been talking extravagantly ever since, did not know her intimate acquaintance, and was terrified at the sight of her best friends. Having thus prepared the physician, he allowed him to visit Laura.

She was just recovered from a fit of stupor when he was introduced. On his addressing her, she raised her head from the pillow and looked very earnestly at him, but made no answer to his questions; on his proposing to retire, she said with a timid voice, I beg, my good sir, that you will not permit the wicked fiend to come near me.

The physician being now confirmed in the belief of what Zeluco had told him, ordered her to be blooded, to be kept very quiet, and not to be disturbed with questions, or in any way encouraged to speak, for it was too evident that her mind was disturbed: at the same time he gave Madame de Seidlits and Signora Sporza great reason to hope, that with care she would be in a short time restored to her perfect health.

Although Zeluco had reason to be pleased with the first part of the physician's declaration, he was alarmed at the last. While Laura remained in her present state, little stress could be laid on what she said; but should she recover, whatever account she gave, he well knew, would carry complete conviction to the minds of all who knew her. He could not indeed accuse himself of a predetermined intention of murdering the child; but he had great reason for remorse and self-condemnation, when he reflected that the child's death was occasioned by the propensity he betrayed in his infancy, and had indulged ever since, of giving way to every impulse of passion. In this hour of reflection, among the many stinging recollections which intruded themselves on his memory, he could not exclude the remonstrance of his tutor, when he himself, yet a child, had in a fit of groundless passion squeezed his sparrow to death; that remonstrance now appeared to his alarmed conscience in the light of a prophecy: Had I paid more regard, said he to himself, to what that worthy man then, and on other occasions, told me, I should not now have reason to dread the consequences of this cursed accident.

Yet, whatever remorse Zeluco felt for various and accumulated instances of wickedness, of which his conscience accused him, what chiefly kept his mind on the rack at present was, a fear that those allusive expressions which constantly dropped from Laura, might lead to a suspicion of the fact which he wished so much to conceal; for however mysterious or incoherent they might appear to others, they were so clear and connected to him, that he received a fresh alarm as often as any of them were repeated; and whatever he hoped, he was by no means certain, that when Laura recovered, she would not relate the fact as it really happened, and accuse him publicly; for these

reasons he fervently wished that she might die of her present illness, or remain distracted.

The continual anxiety he had for his own safety suspended the ripening of a certain plan, which before occupied his thoughts for the destruction of Seidlits, who was now daily expected. His whole attention was directed towards Laura; for, although he never ventured to appear in her sight, yet he took care to have every word reported to him that fell from her lips; and he was kept in continual alarm at the import of her expressions.

CHAPTER XC.

“ Him shall the fury passions tear,

The vultures of the mind,

Disdainful anger, pallid fear,

And shame that skulks behind;

** * * **

Or jealousy, with rankling tooth,

That inly gnaws the heart;

And envy wan, and faded care,

Grim-visag'd comfortless despair,

And sorrow's piercing dart.”

GRAY.

ABOUT this time Carlostein and Seidlits returned from their excursion: they went directly to the house of Madame de Seidlits, and had the first account of the child's death and Laura's indisposition from her maid; Madame de Seidlits herself being then in bed indisposed with the watching and fatigue which she had undergone. The two friends were equally shocked at this affecting narrative; they spoke of calling at Signora Sporza's, but were informed that she slept constantly at the house of Zeluco, and was hardly ever a moment from Laura's bed-side. Captain Seidlits then proposed to go directly there, whither Carlo-

stein thought he could not with propriety accompany him; but, overwhelmed with the deepest sorrow, went to his lodging, there to wait for the return of his friend.

Zeluco received Seidlits with all the appearance of affliction. Alas! my friend, cried he, we have lost your dear little nephew; he was cut off by convulsions in the arms of his mother. I am told by physicians, that such accidents are not uncommon among infants. I leave you to judge of his poor mother's situation; she has been in a most disordered state of mind ever since; and she seems to be always worse after seeing any of her old acquaintance.

To all this Seidlits made little or no answer: but a woman who had the particular care of Laura coming out of her bed-chamber, and reporting that she was more composed than usual, he desired to be admitted to see her.

I fear it will increase her uneasiness, said Zeluco.

I am convinced it will give her pleasure, said Seidlits; for she had always pleasure in seeing me.

Really! said Zeluco, looking fiercely at Seidlits; for a movement of jealousy threw him off his guard.

I have every reason to think so, resumed Seidlits naturally, and without observing how Zeluco was affected.

The doctor must determine, said Laura's nurse, pointing to the physician who entered the room.

The case being stated to him, Let her brother's name be mentioned to her, said he, before he appears, and we will observe how she is affected.

Zeluco did not object to the experiment: he thought something might fall from Laura, on mentioning or seeing Seidlits, which would betray the intimacy that, as he suspected, had been between them.

The physician conducted Seidlits to Laura's bed-

chamber. Zeluco stood at the door, which he kept ajar for the purpose of listening.

Laura sat up in the bed propped with pillows; Signora Sporza near her. The physician whispered to Signora Sporza, that Captain Seidlits was arrived, and in the house; and he then said aloud to her, Your friend Captain Seidlits is safely arrived at Naples.

I am most happy to hear it, said she, looking at Laura, who took no notice.

Did you not hear, my dear, said Signora Sporza, addressing Laura—Did you not hear what the doctor said?

No, replied Laura.

He said your brother Captain Seidlits is returned.

Yes—said Laura, without any emotion.

O merciful Virgin! cried Signora Sporza, bursting into tears, her sweet senses are gone;—she knows not what I say.

What Laura heard, it appeared, made much less impression on her mind than what she saw; for she no sooner beheld Signora Sporza in tears, than she took hold of her hand, and with a look and tone of contrition, said, Woe is me! I fear I have offended you; truly, I meant it not.

I know you did not, my angel, said Signora Sporza; but surely you remember Captain Seidlits?

Seidlits! said Laura.

Yes, my sweet friend, your brother, rejoined Signora Sporza.

My brother! repeated Laura, with a vacant stare—Where is my brother?

Here is your brother, said Captain Seidlits, who, concealed by a skreen, had with impatience heard the conversation, and being no longer able to restrain his emotion, broke forth in this imprudent manner.

Laura screamed and hid her face under the bed-

clothes at his sudden appearance ; My beloved sister, said Seidlits, do you not know me ? Signora Sporza and the physician continuing to assure her that it was her brother, she raised her head and looked with caution and an appearance of terror at Seidlits ; she threw her eyes also around the room as if she suspected that some other person was in it.

There is nobody present but your friends, my love, said Signora Sporza.

I was afraid the wicked fiend had returned, said Laura.

There is no wicked fiend here, my love, said Signora Sporza. This is your brother ; you know him, do you not ?

Surely you do, my dear, said Seidlits with a broken voice.

Laura then looked more attentively at him ; then throwing her eyes on Signora Sporza, she pointed, with a smile, to Seidlits.

Yes, my angel, said Signora Sporza, that is your brother.

Laura made no answer, but continued to look with complacency on Seidlits.

The name of brother affected her not ; but seeing him seemed to give her an agreeable impression without her being able to recollect his connexion with herself ; yet when addressing her in the most affectionate terms he held forth his hand to her, she gave him hers, and displayed not only evident marks of satisfaction while he remained, but also of uneasiness when he proposed to withdraw*.

* The author has been informed that this distinction between the effect of audible and of visible objects, has been criticized as unnatural. He is convinced, however, that he has observed it in people in the state of mind in which Laura is here represented, and in tracing it, he endeavoured to copy

Signora Sporza attended the captain out of the room, and Zeluco conducted both into an adjoining apartment.

How strange! said Zeluco, that she was no way affected when told that you were come?

Seidlits made no answer, but wiped his eyes.

Yet she seemed pleased at seeing you, continued Zeluco.

Seidlits was absorbed in thought, and could not speak for some time; he at length said, addressing himself to Signora Sporza, She seemed in terror at first;—she certainly took me for some other person.—What did she mean by the wicked fiend?

Zeluco anticipated the answer, saying, There is no knowing what she means,—her expressions are so extravagant,—she probably has no meaning; the severe shock she received by the sudden death of the dear child has entirely deranged her memory and judgment; only conceive a woman of her great sensibility to see her child expire in her arms without any visible cause! for, although the physician declares he has known many instances of infants carried off in the same sudden manner, yet her delicate constitution could not stand it;—but, thank Heaven! she is better than she was; and the physician still hopes she will recover entirely.

During this recital Signora Sporza preserved a faithfully from nature. Not to recur to the trite, though true, remark of,

*“Segnius irritant animos demissa per aurem
Quam quæ sunt oculis subjecta fidelibus;”*

I conceive that the eye may continue to do its office of conveying intelligence to the mind long after the latter has ceased to derive any information from words. The communication in the first case is natural and immediate. The second requires the intervention of a medium.

gloomy silence, but at one time shook her head in a manner which struck terror into the heart of Zeluco, and raised suspicions in the mind of Seidlits.

When he went to his lodgings he found Mr. N—with Carlostein. It was not without difficulty and many interruptions that he gave them an account of Laura's situation. They were all so much affected that little conversation passed between them, and Seidlits retired without communicating even to Carlostein the doubts which he had on his mind.

When he called next morning to know how his sister was, he found an opportunity of speaking with Signora Sporza by herself. My dear madam, said he, I beg you will let me know your real sentiments of this melancholy affair. I fear you conceal something.

I know nothing, replied she, which I will not communicate to you.—I do not know what to think.—I left your sister and the child well; in a few hours I returned, and the child was dead, and your lovely sister thus; I then got the same account which you have heard.—We must take patience.—The physician is an honest man, and your sister grows a little better. I never quit her;—we must have patience. Zeluco entering the room, prevented any further conversation.

Laura seemed gradually and uniformly to grow better from the time that Seidlits arrived; but she recovered her bodily strength and looks in a greater proportion than she did her memory and judgement.

Carlostein meanwhile remained in the most agonizing state of suspense; his spirits rose or fell according to the accounts he received of her state of health from the physician, from Signora Sporza, and from his friend Seidlits: he was continually going from the one to the other; and when they were all engaged at the same time with Laura, he walked in

sight of the house watching till one of them came out, that he might receive fresh intelligence on the only subject on which he could think or converse.

CHAPTER XCI.

“O, it is monstrous !

Methought the billows spoke, and told me of it ;

The winds did sing it to me.”

SHAKESPEARE.

THE death of the child, the disorder of Laura, with the fears which oppressed the mind of Zeluco, lest the immediate cause of both should be suspected from the mysterious expressions of Laura, had so much engrossed his time, that it was not in his power to bestow much of his company on Nerina ; he well knew that all the display of sorrow he made would be considered as mere grimace, and would even strengthen the suspicions which his personal safety rendered it so necessary for him to extinguish, if he were known to visit her at the very time he was affecting so much grief on account of the child's death and his wife's disorder. He therefore visited Nerina very seldom, and with the utmost secrecy.

This conduct, though prudent and expedient in Zeluco's situation, was highly offensive to Nerina, and all the apologies and explanations he was able to make could not persuade her to view it in any other light.

It is true, she was not acquainted with the chief reason he had for observing this line of conduct ; for although he had informed Nerina of the child's sudden death, and the effect it had produced on Laura, he was of too reserved and cautious a temper to intrust her with the original cause of both, which constantly preyed upon his mind, and filled him with increasing inquietude.

In one of his secret visits to her, she imputed the dejection of spirits which arose from those painful reflections, to grief for the death of his child; and considering this as an insult to her, she could not refrain from displaying her ill-humour.

I cannot help thinking you one of the most fortunate men living, said she to him.

In what? said he, a little surprised at the observation.

Why, in getting so cleverly rid of a bastard, replied she, who would have cut off great part of your fortune from your own children if ever you have any.

To this Zeluco making no reply, she proceeded: But although you have been so providentially freed from one, it would be wise in you to be a little more watchful in future; you may not get so quickly rid of the next.

At this observation he fell into a fit of swearing.

I am not surprised at your ill-humour, continued she; it is to be sure a little provoking to have a wife who pretends to have lost her senses, and a brother-in-law so disagreeable to you and so very agreeable to her, constantly at her bed-side.

Pretends! cried Zeluco: Can you conceive it is pretence?

Nay, replied Nerina, you ought to be the best judge of your wife's sensibility; but one cannot help thinking it a little extraordinary that she should be so much affected with a loss which she can so readily supply.

Zeluco poured fresh execrations on Laura and her brother, wishing he knew how to get quit of both.

Contrive only to free yourself from *her*, said Nerina, and you will be no longer troubled with *him*.

I shall never be freed from her, said he peevishly; she grows better instead of worse.

Do not despair, said Nerina, she may depart when it is least expected.

No.—She grows better, I tell you, said Zeluco; there is no chance of her departure now.

There is one chance, however, said Nerina.

What is that? said Zeluco eagerly.

She may be snapped off in such a fit as the child was, said Nerina.

At this random expression, the alarmed heart of Zeluco shrunk; he became pale as ashes, and staring wildly, in a voice half suppressed he uttered, What do you mean?

Mean! said she, surprised at his emotion: What do *you* mean?—What in the name of wonder disturbs you?—Gracious heaven, how pale you are!—I do not know what I said.—What can be the matter with you?

I grew sick all of a sudden, said he, recovering his presence of mind; but it is passing away already.

I hope it was nothing which I said that affected you so?

No; not in the least, replied Zeluco, forcing a smile; I did not observe what you said: I was thinking of something else;—but I have been subject of late to sickish qualms which invade me suddenly, and make me look very pale.

You never mentioned this to me before? said Nerina.

No, assuredly, said Zeluco; I hate to mention it to any body, or even to think of it.—Let us talk of something else.

The usual consequence of vice was strongly felt by this unhappy man; though naturally bold and daring, the conscious guilt which hung upon his mind unmanned him to such a degree, that he was appalled at every accidental expression; and the constant uneasi-

ness which this occasioned suggested fresh crimes to free him from the effects of the former.

In spite of all his endeavours against them, he often fell into fits of musing while he remained with Nerina ; when she accused him of this, and inquired into the cause of his dejection, he imputed it to a return of sickness ; and on her stating this as a mere pretext to conceal the true cause, Why then, said he, by way of pleasing her, and to prevent her further inquiries, if you will have the truth, I am embarrassed with a wife, which puts it out of my power to devote my whole time and attention to her on whom my heart is fixed.

In her present situation, said Nerina, if your wife really is in the state you seem to think, it were better for the woman herself that she were dead.

That may be, said Zeluco ; but she will not die a minute the sooner for that.

What is the physician's opinion ? resumed Nerina.

It is impossible to know, replied Zeluco ; those fellows never give their real opinion.

I have no notion of employing a physician who will not give what opinion, and also what medicines are most expedient, said Nerina.

To this strange speech Zeluco made no answer.

What medicines *does* he give her ? resumed she.

Upon my soul I never asked, said Zeluco.

Because, resumed Nerina, I believe they give laudanum in such cases : I happened to know this by a singular accident enough : an acquaintance of mine was affected in the same way ; she was ordered by a physician a certain number of drops every night ; her maid by mistake gave a whole phial full, and she died next morning in the pleasantest way imaginable ; her relations made a rout about it at first, but on calm reflection they were satisfied that in the patient's situ-

ation it was the luckiest accident that could have befallen her.

Zeluco, without seeming to understand the import of this story, replied coldly, I shall leave the physician to treat his patient as he pleases.

The constant terror under which Zeluco was, lest Laura, whether intentionally or not, should say any thing which might create suspicion against himself, was sufficient, independent of his absurd jealousy, to have converted his indifference for her into a rancorous hatred. He now wished for nothing more eagerly than her death, and the hint thrown out by Nerina was not lost on him ; but, as yet undetermined whether he should adopt it or not, he resolved at all events to act without a confident.

CHAPTER XCII.

“ *———Animum picturâ pascit inani,
Multa gemens ———
Dum stupet, obtutuque hæret defixus in uno.*” VIRG.

IN the mean time Laura seemed somewhat better ; she had been free from lethargic stupor and faintings for a considerable interval, but still continued languid and dejected, and was in general silent ; sometimes she shed tears, and without any obvious cause ; at other times she seemed tolerably cheerful, particularly when her brother entered the room ; her bodily health upon the whole was greatly better, but her memory and understanding continued impaired : she never inquired for any body, nor seemed to recollect that they existed till they appeared before her, on which it was evident whom she preferred : when she spoke, it was always in short and unconnected sentences.

Madame de Seidlits's indisposition confined her almost constantly to her chamber, so that Signora Sporza, Captain Seidlits, and her maids, were the only persons besides the physician whom Laura saw.

One morning after Zeluco had rode out, Signora Sporza and Seidlits, by the physician's permission, conducted Laura from her own apartment to a higher chamber, from whence there was a very commanding prospect. She sat for some time at the window, looking with complacency at the beautiful and varied scenery before her eyes, while Seidlits pointed out the particular objects. Both he and Signora Sporza were delighted with the composure of mind which Laura retained on this occasion.

She then rose and walked about the room, till a picture which hung on the wall engaged her attention: the subject was the Massacre of the Innocents.—The instant she perceived it, she started and betrayed great emotion, but her eyes soon were riveted on one particular group; it consisted of a mother struggling with a fierce soldier, who with one hand aimed a poniard at her infant, while with the other he grasped the child by the throat.

When Signora Sporza perceived what peculiarly engrossed Laura's attention, she endeavoured to remove her from the picture: it was not in her power. Laura was fascinated to the spot; she held her friend with a rigid grasp, while, with her face projected, her eyes devoured the group. What is the meaning of this? what alarms you, my sister? cried Seidlits.—Laura turned to him with a distracted glance, and then pointing with her finger to the assassin who grasped the child, she cried with a voice of wildness and terror,—Look!—look!—and being immediately seized with convulsions, she was in that state carried to bed.

The physician prescribed some calming medicines, notwithstanding which the convulsions and spasms

continued at intervals for near two hours, when they abated, and she fell into a slumber.

When Captain Seidlits understood that Laura was in this state, he had the curiosity to return to the room in which she was taken ill; and Signora Sporza, excited by the same curiosity, left her friend for a few minutes and followed him. She found Seidlits examining the picture: it happened by a singular coincidence, that the face of the assassinating soldier had some resemblance to that of Zeluco. Signora Sporza had not looked long at the picture till she observed it; Almighty Providence! exclaimed she, How is this? and then she looked at Captain Seidlits.

It is certainly so, said he; I am quite of your opinion.

What, you perceive a likeness? resumed she.

A most diabolic likeness, answered Seidlits.

But the subject was what first attracted her notice, continued Signora Sporza.

Which confirms my suspicions, said he, that this accursed villain—— As Seidlits raised his voice, Signora Sporza, clapping her hand on his mouth, begged him to be more temperate. After some conversation, they agreed to the propriety of concealing their sentiments, till they could get more light into a matter so mysterious, and which gave birth to ideas so horrid: Captain Seidlits gave her his promise to take no step without acquainting her, and she assured him of all the assistance she could give in his endeavours to get at the truth.

But their mutual efforts to this purpose were suspended by the increasing danger of Laura; the slumber in which they left her did not continue long, she was restless, uneasy, and feverish in the night; the feverish symptoms augmented next day, she was delirious the whole of the following night, and was for three days in such imminent danger that all her attend-

ants *dreaded*, and her husband *hoped*, that she would expire: but all at once, when she seemed at the height of danger, she fell into a profound calm and long continued sleep, at the end of which she awoke entirely free from fever, and with her memory and senses restored.

The joy of Signora Sporza and Captain Seidlits on this happy event was somewhat mitigated by the fear that, Laura's memory being now returned, a recollection of the child's death, and the circumstances attending it, might produce a relapse; but whether it was the natural consequence of that languor to which the fever reduced Laura, or whatever else was the cause, certain it is that she bore the recollection of the scene which first occasioned her illness with diminished sensibility; her sorrow was accompanied with none of those violent effects, but seemed to be all at once melted into a calm uniform melancholy: and the physician gave the most flattering hopes of the full restoration of her strength and spirits, desiring at the same time that nothing should be said during her convalescence which alluded to her child.

Laura herself perceived that every allusion of that nature was carefully avoided; but one day when Signora Sporza was with her alone, she asked how her poor mother had borne the shock of the child's death; and put several other questions to Signora Sporza respecting the interment of the infant. During the recital, which was given in consequence of those inquiries, she wept abundantly, but soon wiping away her tears, she said, Why should I be grieved for my child? he has escaped many evils to which he must have been exposed had he lived; some of them of more importance than that of dying; but his future happiness is now secure.

Signora Sporza finding, to her great surprise and satisfaction, that she could speak with such serenity

on this subject, took occasion some time after to ask Laura, what she thought gave occasion to the *convulsions* of which the infant died? From this question Laura perceived at once what account Zeluco had given of that transaction, and from Signora Sporza's manner, as well as from her subsequent inquiries, Laura also perceived that her friend had suspicions that his account was not exactly true. To these inquiries she answered that it was impossible for her to tell what was the cause of such fits, but she had often heard that infants were liable to them from various causes; and by her manner she plainly showed that she was not inclined to speak more fully on the subject. Laura knew that she was the only witness of the child's death, and although she had come to a resolution to take measures for being for ever separated from her husband, she was equally determined not to appear herself, or put it in the power of any other person to appear, as his accuser.

During all the time that Laura was disordered, Zeluco had kept out of her sight, on the pretence that he could not bear to see one so dear to him in that melancholy state; the real reason was, his dreading that she would discover symptoms of horror, and thereby give rise to suspicions which he was most solicitous to prevent.

As she was now, to his great sorrow, much better in her bodily health, and not at all disordered in other respects, he thought it would seem very singular for him to delay seeing her any longer; but being willing to sound her own inclination in the first place, he told the physician he was impatient to see his beloved wife, but would not till he should know from him if he could with safety. The physician mentioned this to Laura, who immediately declared that she could not as yet bear the company or conversation of any body, except that of her mother, who was now some-

what better, or of Signora Sporza ; that even theirs, when unusually prolonged, occasioned head-ach and feverishness ; she begged, therefore, that no other, not even her brother, or husband, would think of visiting her till she was stronger. Laura had added her brother, whom she had not seen since the picture scene, to render the exclusion of her husband the less extraordinary.

Ever since her mind had recovered its powers, Laura had been reflecting how she ought to proceed in order to obtain a separation from her husband with the least possible eclat or other disagreeable circumstance ; having resolved to conceal her principal reason, she did not choose to consult with her mother, brother, or Signora Sporza, till she had tried what effect an application to Zeluco himself would have.—What the physician told her rendered her impatient to make this trial. Having written the following letter, therefore, she sent it to her husband, when she knew he was alone in his own apartment.

“ To Signor Zeluco.

“ You cannot be surprised, or sorry to be informed, that it is my unalterable resolution never to see you more.

“ I am the only witness of the horrid deed.

“ I have mentioned it to no mortal, nor ever shall, unless forced by your refusal to comply with my proposal, or by madness, into which a sight of you might again drive me.

“ The plan of separation shall be proposed by me to my friends, and on a pretext which cannot affect you ; all I require is your concurrence, that it may take place without noise or difficulty.

“ I demand no settlement ;—but shall delay mentioning this affair to my relations till my mother's

health is a little better established, which there is every appearance will be very soon.

“ Do not think of turning me from my purpose ; the attempt alone will involve you in trouble.

“ I desire no answer but a simple assent, and shall ever pray that the mercy of Heaven may be extended to you.

“ LAURA SEIDLITS.”

Zeluco was preparing to go abroad when he received this letter ; he changed his purpose, and remained in his apartment the whole day.

He was at first so much exasperated, that he had thoughts of bursting into Laura's apartment, demanding an explanation of what she had written, with a view of intimidating her into silence, by threats of confining her for life as a distracted woman, if she dared to accuse him. But a very little reflection convinced him of the danger such a measure would be attended with ; besides, he saw that no colouring of his would efface the impression which her story, if she was forced to unfold it, must make on a public by no means disposed to think with partiality of him. Zeluco, therefore, determined on this occasion to bridle the impetuosity of his rage, and make both his pride and humour obey the dictates of prudence ; he relinquished every openly violent measure, and sent the following answer to Laura :

“ ALTHOUGH I understand not what some parts of your letter allude to, I agree to your proposal of separation ; when you mention this matter to your relations, you will let them know, that although this proceeds entirely from a piece of humour of your own, unsought by me, yet I am willing to give you a reasonable annuity for life.”

Laura was greatly pleased with this answer: she was resolved to accept of no settlement from Zeluco, but thought it best to say nothing on that head, till she should remove from his house. She herself would have preferred returning to Germany, had she not feared it would be disagreeable to her mother, and had she not mistrusted her own heart, which she was conscious suggested that measure from partiality to Carlostein. The plan, therefore, which she resolved to adopt immediately after the separation was, to take refuge, for some time at least, in a convent at Naples, or perhaps at Rome or Florence, where she could board at a very moderate expense; and having determined to acquaint no mortal with the chief reason of this separation, she expected to meet with difficulty in convincing her mother of its propriety; and therefore she watched the advance of her health, that she might mention it at a time when she would suffer little from the uneasiness it would give her.

CHAPTER XCIII.

Me, me (adsum qui feci), in me convertite ferrum. VIRG.

CAPTAIN Seidlits informed his friend Carlostein of the effect which the sight of the picture had on Laura; also of his own and Signora Sporza's suspicions relating to the child's death and the mother's illness, which suspicions acquired new strength from the second illness of Laura, and the singular manner in which it had originated. While Laura continued in danger, the minds of her relations were so much agitated, that they could think of nothing else; but when the danger was over, and it appeared that the crisis of the fever had not only thrown off the bodily disease

but also the mental disorder, Seidlits resumed his conferences with Carlostein respecting the mysterious circumstances which accompanied the child's death, and had occurred since ; and Carlostein expressing a great desire to see the picture, Seidlits conducted him one day to the room in which it hung.

There is the villain ! said Seidlits, pointing to the figure of the soldier with the poniard. Observe with what fury he aims at the child.—Carlostein continued to examine the group with silent attention.

It is true, resumed Seidlits, that there was no wound on the body of my sister's infant.

But observe, said Carlostein, with what force the murderer *grasps* that child by the throat.

Do you not see the resemblance which strikes Signora Sporza ? continued Seidlits, not having perceived the import of Carlostein's remark.

Yes ; I perceive something of that nature ; not a great deal, however, answered Carlostein, who already repented of the insinuation which had escaped him, for he wished not to strengthen his friend's suspicions without stronger evidence.

The resemblance seems to me very evident, said Seidlits.

Perhaps there is some resemblance, added Carlostein ; such things occur often enough."

Do you not think it would strike the villain himself, were he so see it ? said Seidlits.

I should think not, replied Carlostein, who dreaded the consequence of his friend's retaining that idea.

Pray lend me your pencil, said Seidlits ; it *shall* strike him, by Heaven ! if he ever looks at it.

He immediately wrote over the figure of the soldier the name of *Zeluco*.—There, said he, now it will be impossible for him to mistake his representative.

Carlostein endeavoured to prevail upon his friend

to obliterate what he had written ; but finding him obstinate, he determined to get Signora Sporza to do it before there was any probability of Zeluco's entering that room.

As Carlostein and Seidlits walked out of the court, they met Zeluco. Carlostein having received the pencil, still held it in his hand ; but seeing his friend's eyes kindle at the approach of Zeluco, he whispered, Pray, say nothing to him at present.—I must give him a slight hint, replied Seidlits ; and then said aloud to Zeluco, We were examining the picture, signor, which affected my sister so violently.

What picture ? said Zeluco. I know nothing of a picture.

Signora Sporza had concealed that incident carefully from him ; having only informed him that Laura had relapsed suddenly, without mentioning the cause.

By much the most interesting piece in your collection, replied Seidlits ; it had almost proved fatal to your wife : pray examine it carefully, and when we next meet, I shall be glad to know how you relish it. Having said this, Seidlits walked on, and Carlostein whispered Zeluco, There is a name written *with this pencil* over the principal figure ; if you wish for any further éclaircissement, apply to me.—I shall be at home in less than an hour, and ready to give you whatever satisfaction you desire.

Carlostein was fully persuaded that the consequence of Zeluco's looking at the picture, with the style in which Seidlits had directed him to it, must be a personal quarrel between them ; he knew that Laura dreaded nothing more than such an event, and well remembered with what earnestness she had intreated him, if he should ever see any appearance of that kind, to do every thing in his power to prevent it. She had once said, talking on that subject to Signora

Sporza, that she would consider this as the greatest obligation that any person could confer upon her. He had accordingly endeavoured as much as he could to prevail on Seidlits to obliterate the name; he had resolved to write to Signora Sporza to do what Seidlits refused; and he had tried to prevent Seidlits from addressing Zeluco in the manner he did. Having failed in all, he saw no means of obviating a personal contest between the husband and brother of Laura, but by drawing the resentment of Zeluco from Seidlits to himself; this having struck him instantly, he whispered Zeluco as has been mentioned.

Carlostein had also another reason for being solicitous to prevent Seidlits from meeting Zeluco in the field; he knew the latter to be far more skilful and expert in the use of the small sword than his friend.

He had often seen them fence together, and Zeluco had an evident superiority even when he did not exert his whole powers. Although Seidlits had been as fully convinced of this as his friend, which he was not, it would, on the present occasion, have had no weight with them. Pistols were out of the question, no such weapon being used in affairs of this nature in Italy. Carlostein imagined himself rather a more skilful fencer than Seidlits, though conscious of being by much inferior to Zeluco, who was accounted one of the best in the kingdom of Naples.

When the two friends had walked a little way after quitting Zeluco, Seidlits turning round to Carlostein, who followed him, said, I shall certainly hear from him this afternoon or to-morrow.

I dare swear, answered Carlostein, he will take till to-morrow to consider in what manner he is to ask an explanation of the words which you addressed to him.

I shall give him a very brief and clear explanation whenever he does, said Seidlits.

Suppose, resumed Carlostein, he should be able to explain to your satisfaction the circumstances which seem so dismally mysterious to us.

I shall make an apology without hesitation, said Seidlits. But you will *attend me* in case we do go out?

Of course, replied Carlostein. If I remember, you are engaged to dinner at our minister's.—You go, I suppose?

I cannot do otherwise, said Seidlits; but I will leave word with Targe to bring me any message.

I am convinced you will have none before to-morrow, rejoined Carlostein; and if no accommodation takes place, you will probably arrange matters for the following morning:—at all events, I shall have a post-chaise prepared to carry you directly to the ecclesiastical state.

Pray do, said Seidlits, for I am confident I shall do his business for all his vaunted skill:—there is some difference between a foil and a sword. Adieu, I must dress for dinner.—You dine with Mr N—, do you not?

I do, replied Carlostein; but we shall meet in the evening. They separated.

Zeluco had observed something fierce and menacing in the countenances both of Carlostein and Seidlits; he was much more surprised at this in the former than in the latter, because Carlostein and he had always been apparently, at least, on the most friendly footing. He could not comprehend the import of what was said by either. On going up stairs, he demanded of one of Laura's maids, in what room her mistress was when she was last taken ill. On entering the room, he threw his eyes in a cursory manner over the pictures, but the moment he perceived the Massacre of the Innocents, his heart shrunk within him, and he was convinced that this must be the piece

in question; with a trembling step he approached nearer to the picture, and having distinguished the soldier grasping the neck of the child, he started back, as if the poniard had been aimed at his own breast:—after a pause, he advanced again, forcing his averted eyes once more on the picture, and with horror and dismay observed his own name inscribed over the head of the soldier.

Perplexed, confounded, and terrified, he shrank down upon a chair; and as soon as he was able to walk, he stole down stairs, and shut himself up in his own apartment.

He had promised to pass that evening with Nerina, but finding himself in a state of such perturbation, quite undetermined what measures to adopt, not daring to inform her or any other person of the cause of his perplexity; he sent a verbal message by the servant usually employed by them, importing, That he was taken suddenly ill, and therefore could not possibly wait on her at the appointed time; but if he found himself better, he should have that pleasure the following evening.

Having dismissed the footman with this message, he continued in painful reflection on these extraordinary incidents; he could no longer doubt of both Seidlits and Carlostein's having strong suspicions of his being the cause of the child's death and Laura's illness: he was impressed also with the notion that those suspicions were conveyed to them by Laura, either designedly, when she recovered her memory, or undesignedly, during the ravings of her disorder: in either case she was the object of his undistinguishing vengeance.

His former plan of treating her as a mad woman, he saw would not be of any use now, when, to his infinite mortification, she was perfectly recovered. He felt the necessity under which he was to demand

an explanation of Seidlits and Carlostein. As the expressions which Carlostein had whispered were the most direct and pointed, he resolved to begin with him. Yet should the effect of this be a duel, he plainly saw, that by attracting the public attention, and exciting inquiries, it would produce a great many of those consequences he so anxiously wished to prevent.

In this state of hesitation and direful perplexity, how often did this wretched man wish for a friend to whom he could with safety unbosom himself, and from whom he might receive counsel and consolation? but having in the whole course of his life been the friend of no man, he well knew that no man was his friend. He could hardly meet an eye even in his own family, which he did not suspect of looking on him with aversion, either from love for Laura, or direct hatred for him.

After weighing all the difficulties and dangers, a great choice of which presented themselves to his mind, he could form no fixed plan of future conduct, but in the mean time thought himself absolutely bound, without further hesitation, to go and talk to Carlostein.

In all cases where he was not disturbed by conscience, which makes cowards of us all, Zeluco had less personal fear than most people; but as he was equally devoid of principle, his notions on the subject of duelling were somewhat singular.

One of his maxims was, that a man who injured another might, consistently with good sense, and ought, from a regard to his own character, to fight the person he had injured, the moment he was required; but he thought it in the highest degree silly and absurd in the injured person to take such a dangerous and precarious method of obtaining reparation; justice and common sense would dictate, he imagined, some

more certain plan of vengeance, except indeed the injury was known to the public, or of a nature which admitted of no delay. In such cases, a regard to the world's opinion superseded every other consideration. His present business with Carlostein he considered in this last class ; he had no doubt of Carlostein's having communicated to Seidlits and to others what he had whispered to himself : therefore, notwithstanding that he considered himself as the injured person, not the injurer, he thought it incumbent on him to demand an explanation in the usual mode ; being determined however not to bring matters to the last extremity, if he could find any plausible means of avoiding it ; not that he feared the issue of the duel, being too confident in his own skill to harbour any doubt ; but merely because he wished, if possible, to avoid every measure which might tend to make an eclat, or lead to inquiries into the cause of the quarrel.

CHAPTER XCIV.

“ What stronger breast-plate than a heart untainted ?
 Thrice is he armed that has his quarrel just ;
 And he but naked, though lock'd up in steel,
 Whose conscience with injustice is corrupted.”

SHAKESPEARE.

ZELUCO found Carlostein, as he expected, alone. You will not be surprised at seeing me, sir, after your late behaviour, said Zeluco.

I am not surprised, replied Carlostein.

You promised me an explanation, added Zeluco.

Propose your difficulty, rejoined Carlostein, and you'll find me as good as my word.

I was desired to examine a picture, said Zeluco fiercely.

Which I presume you have done, added Carlostein with calmness.

I *have*, answered Zeluco ; and I find somebody has had the insolence to inscribe my name over one of the figures.

You could not miss it, said Carlostein ; it was very distinctly written with this pencil ; taking the pencil out of his pocket ;—but there was no insolence intended.

What was intended then ? said Zeluco, in somewhat of a milder tone ; for he began to imagine that Carlostein meant to explain it in a friendly or jocular manner.

It was intended, replied Carlostein, in a sedate and solemn accent, to signify the conformity of character and conduct between you and a murderer.

This answer, being rather unexpected, disconcerted Zeluco a little ; but recovering himself, he said, You can have but one meaning by such behaviour, sir ; I expect you will meet me to-morrow morning.

Wherever you are pleased to appoint, said Carlostein.

After some further conversation, they agreed to meet at a remote spot, which happened to be near the villa where Nerina dwelt, and at an early hour ; each to be attended by a friend.

I presume, said Zeluco, Captain Seidlits will accompany you ?

He is the very last man I should think of on this occasion ; neither Captain Seidlits nor any other person, except the gentleman who *is* to attend me, shall know of what has passed between us ; for this I pledge my honour. As Carlostein pronounced the last sentence, he looked at Zeluco as if he expected an assurance to the same purpose from him.

None but a coward would act otherwise, said Zeluco.

It is well, said Carlostein. Now, signor, your weapon?

The sword, unquestionably, replied Zeluco.

Although you are the challenger, and I am not ignorant of your dexterity at that particular weapon, I agree, said Carlostein.

If you have any objection to the weapon of a gentleman, you should have thought of it before you insulted one, said Zeluco.

I have told you, said Carlostein, that I agree.

Immediately on their separating, Carlostein informed Mr. N—— of all that had passed; and asked the favour of his accompanying him to the place of rendezvous.

Mr. N—— accepted the invitation, after having expressed his admiration of the generous conduct of Carlostein; for he plainly perceived, notwithstanding Carlostein's having passed over that circumstance, that he had provoked the quarrel to prevent Seidlits from being engaged in it. Carlostein begged that he would let nothing escape him, in case of his meeting Seidlits, that could give him any suspicion of what was intended. Mr. N—— assured him he would be on his guard. But I am afraid, added he, that, by your eagerness to prevent Laura from the danger of losing a brother, you expose her to a misfortune which she will feel with still severer anguish.

Carlostein made no other answer to this observation of Mr. N——'s than a gentle inclination of the head.

The generous friendship of Mr. N——, for Carlostein was increased, and not diminished, by the great regard which he had long observed Laura had for him. What gave him most uneasiness in the business of the following morning was, the fear of any fatal accident happening to Carlostein, which although he should regret on his own account, he was of a character to re-

gret doubly on account of the affliction it would occasion to Laura.

When Carlostein met Seidlits in the evening, he told him that he had as yet heard nothing from Zeluco.

Carlostein answered, that he was convinced there would be no message till next day. Indeed, added he, I think you had best keep out of his way for this evening; let him digest what he has already got, before you give him any new provocation.

If a sight of me disturbs his digestion, said Seidlits, he must keep out of my way, for I shall certainly take no pains to keep out of his; nor will I circumscribe my walks or visits on account of any man alive.

I only meant for this evening, rejoined Carlostein.

Well, interrupted Seidlits, if he wishes not to meet me this evening, he had best not appear at the Corso; for I am engaged with some company there about this time; and shall go directly; perhaps you will go with me?—Carlostein excused himself, after begging of his friend to return soon to their lodgings. He was particularly solicitous to prevent Seidlits from meeting with Zeluco that evening, foreseeing that it might entirely defeat the plan he had already settled for the next morning.

In the mean while, Zeluco, wishing to conceal the source of this dispute as long as possible, did not choose to apply to any person acquainted with Seidlits or Laura to accompany him next morning, lest they should make inquiries which he might not choose to answer; he therefore waited on Bertram the Genevois, and as an old brother-officer, and a person of whose gallant spirit he had a high opinion, begged he would accompany him the following morning on an affair of honour with a foreign officer, who, he said, had insulted him.

Bertram hesitated, and expressed a desire of know-

ing the particulars of the quarrel.—Is there no possibility, said he, of accommodating the affair?

Zeluco assured him he had been insulted in such a manner as no gentleman could bear without a very ample apology; and then, to prevent his insisting on knowing the particulars, added, If my antagonist agrees to make such an apology as you shall think sufficient, I assure you that it shall satisfy me.

Bertram then consented, in the hope that it would be in his power to bring the affair to an amicable termination. On being informed of the place, he recollected it perfectly, having frequently taken notice of it during the various excursions which he had made since his arrival at Naples; and he promised to call on Zeluco precisely at the hour appointed.

When Zeluco returned home he found the following letter from Nerina:

“MERCIFUL Heaven! what is the matter with you? What am I to think of a verbal message of such cruel import? Do you not know how my soul dotes on you? Do you not know how miserably I pass the lingering moments which cruel fate obliges me to spend out of your company?—Or are you so ill that you cannot write?—Ah! let me not palliate your conduct by a supposition which would render me more wretched than even your neglect. No; let me be blest in the certainty of your recovery, and I will endeavour to support whatever other misfortune may befall me. Let me know by the bearer at what hour I may expect you to-morrow. But I earnestly entreat, that no consideration, which solely regards me, may induce you to venture out sooner than it can be done with safety to your health; that I may not purchase a transient happiness at the price of a whole life of despair. Alas! why am I not permitted to tend you, to watch you through the sleepless night, and

endeavour to cheer the gloom of sickness? That were happiness indeed, when compared to the tortures of absence and uncertainty. Write, or rather let your valet write, a short line to the wretched

“NERINA.”

Zeluco was himself a great dissembler, exceedingly profuse in compliments and professions of attachment, naturally suspicious, and generally acute in discovering the concealed motives and designs of others; yet the cajoleries of this woman lulled his usual diffidence, and his penetration was the dupe of his vanity.

Had he seen such a letter as this from any woman to another man, he would have been instantly convinced that the artful effusion was dictated by affected, not real passion; and he would have considered it as weakness and vanity in any man to be imposed upon by it for a moment: yet such is the fascination of self-love, that he thought the same sentiments sincere and natural when he was himself their object, that he would have considered as extravagant and deceitful had they been addressed to another man. His answer was couched in the following words:

“My dearest Nerina,

“MAKE yourself easy—I am somewhat better already. Your affectionate letter has contributed to my recovery. When my servant left me, I could not write without pain: but had I thought of the uneasiness which the omission would give you, I should not have permitted him to return without a letter. I may possibly have it in my power to wait on you to-morrow at dinner, certainly not sooner; at any rate you will hear from me, and you need not expect me, nor send any message till then.

“I remain most affectionately,

“Yours, &c. &c.”

CHAPTER XCV.

“ — *quo modo adolescentulus*

Meretricum ingenia et mores posset noscere :

Mature ut cum cognorit, perpetuo oderit.”

TERENT.

IMMEDIATELY after engaging Bertram to accompany him to the field, Zeluco took precautions to insure his own escape out of the kingdom of Naples, in case it should be necessary ; he next employed himself in burning certain papers, in arranging others ; and having prepared whatever he thought necessary, and given orders to his servant at what hour to call him in the morning, he went to bed in the hope of being refreshed by sleep before his meeting with Carlostein ; but such a tempest of distracting thoughts rushed on his mind as totally deprived him of repose. The violent impression which the sight of the painted murderer of a child had made on Laura, with which he thought even her maids were acquainted, was sufficient to create a pretty general suspicion of the real fact. What had been written to him by Laura, strongly hinted by Seidlits, and directly asserted by Carlostein, were evidences that they all believed him to be accessory to the death of the child. And he often cursed the unlucky incidents by which, while he was projecting a scheme of secure revenge against his wife and her brother, he found himself unavoidably engaged in a contest, on equal terms, with a third person, against whom he never before had harboured any enmity. In the event of his killing Carlostein, of which he had little doubt, it struck him that Laura, or perhaps her brother, might during his absence mention such circumstances relative to the child's death, as would give the public an impression

against him, which they themselves, should they be so inclined afterwards, might not be able to efface.

This idea prompted him to rise and to write a letter addressed to Laura, in which he cautioned her in general terms not to allow any expression to escape her which might injure him during his temporary absence; and advising her to admonish her brother to the same effect; for that any thing of that nature would prove ruinous to themselves, and would most materially injure her mother. This letter he sealed and put into his pocket, intending to send it to her from the field, in case it should be necessary after his business with Carlostein was over.

The picture and the inscription came next into his recollection; he had already locked the door of the room, and put the key into his escritoire; but now, all the family being asleep, he stole again to the room, unfixed the picture from the wall, brought it into his own bed-chamber, and burnt it to ashes.

He threw himself again into his bed, but with as little success as before: a retrospect of his past life, which obtruded itself upon his mind, in spite of all his endeavours to exclude it, and the dread of the world's soon reviewing it in the same light that he himself did, with a confused prospect of consequences which he dreaded without knowing how to prevent, banished sleep from his pillow. He rose, and walked with precipitation about his chamber, as if he could have dissipated the uneasiness of his mind by the agitation of his body. Nerina's letter lay on the table—he read it once more, and with redoubled complacency.—Convinced of the sincerity of *her* attachment, he could not flatter himself with the friendship of another person on earth. In moments of difficulty and distress, it is natural for the most arrogant and stubborn of the human race to wish for the support of friendship and of love, however powerless the person is in whose breast

they reside. There was yet an interval of two or three hours to the time at which Bertram was to call for him. In the state of anxiety and impatience in which Zeluco was, it appeared an age.

“ With what a leaden and retarding weight
Does expectation load the wings of time * ! ”

This fine observation of the poet is not only highly applicable where he places it, but is also just when the mind is agitated with the thoughts of any important event which we know to be unavoidable, and have no hopes of tranquillity till it has taken place. Zeluco had sometimes found that Nerina had the art of unloading the wings of time; and being seized with an irresistible desire of passing the interval till he should meet Carlostein with her, he ordered his horses to be got ready, and wrote the following note directed to Bertram :

“ Dear Bertram,

“ I HAVE ordered two horses to be ready, one for you, the other for the servant, who will deliver you this, and then accompany you to the appointed place, where you will find me waiting your arrival. I will then inform you why I set out before you.

“ I am your assured friend,

“ and obliged servant,

“ ZELUCO.”

Having given the necessary directions to the servant who waited for Bertram, he set out, attended by another servant, for the habitation of Nerina, where he arrived a little after day-break.

Confident of a cordial welcome at all hours, he entered without knocking, by the means of a key which he kept for that purpose. Being obliged to pass

through the parlour in his way to the bed-chamber of Nerina, he was somewhat surprised to find her maid up at so early an hour. The maid was still more surprised at seeing him. He asked how her mistress was; and, without waiting for her answer, walked towards Nerina's chamber.

Maria Vergine! cried the maid, running between him and the door.

What is the matter? said Zeluco.

Lord, sir! cried the maid, you cannot see my mistress at present.

Why not?

Dear sir, replied the maid, only stay in the parlour till I acquaint my mistress that you are here.

Psha! said Zeluco, pushing her aside.

O Lord, sir, cried the maid, taking hold of his coat, you will terrify my mistress out of her senses, if you go in to her at this unseasonable hour.

Get along, said Zeluco, shaking her from him.

My mistress is indisposed, sir; she is extremely ill, said the maid.

Ill! cried Zeluco.

Yes, said the maid; she has been exceedingly ill these two days.

She did not mention that in the letter I received from her yesterday.

No! that is very odd, indeed, cried the maid, but she has forgot it; for you know my mistress sometimes has but an indifferent memory. Pray, sir, be so obliging as to return to the parlour, till I inform my mistress that you are come; when I have informed her, I dare swear she will be very happy to see you. But——

Peace, babbler, cried Zeluco, pushing her aside, and walking through the passage towards Nerina's bed-chamber.

Pray, Signor Zeluco, stay in the parlour; indeed,

Signor Zeluco, you'll frighten my mistress,—dear Signor Zeluco,—I protest, Signor Zeluco,—following him through the passage, and raising her voice louder and louder; but perceiving him pushing with violence at the door of the bed-chamber, she screamed, O, my poor mistress will be murdered; and immediately the voice of Nerina was heard from within, shrieking and crying out, Murder! rape! murder! villain! monster, be gone!

Zeluco drew his sword, drove the door open with a violent kick of his foot, and, to his utter astonishment, saw a man, half-dressed, standing by the bed of Nerina.

What is your business here, scoundrel? cried Zeluco, furious with rage, and making a push at him with his sword.

The fellow very dexterously put the sword aside with one hand, plunged a stiletto into the bowels of Zeluco with the other, and made his escape.

Zeluco fell to the ground.

Nerina, who had continued screaming from the bed, seeing Zeluco fall, sprang up, exclaiming, Oh, the villain has murdered my dear lord! kneeling down by him, and offering her aid.

Be gone, perfidious wretch! said Zeluco with a faint voice.

With loud lamentations she took all the saints of heaven, with the angels and blessed martyrs, to witness, that she was innocent as the chaste Susanna, or the Holy Virgin herself; for that the villain had concealed himself in her chamber, with an intention to rob or murder her; and that, being awaked by the voice of her maid in the passage, she had perceived him for the first time, and instantly cried out.

Zeluco, without seeming to regard her, desired the maid to call in his own servant.

As soon as with his assistance he was placed on the

bed, a message was dispatched to Naples for surgeons.

The man who stabbed Zeluco we had not occasion to mention before, although he was an old acquaintance of Nerina's. He was originally a rope-dancer; she had first seen him at Venice, where he was greatly admired for his shape, strength, and agility. She found means to prevail on him to quit his profession, and attach himself entirely to her service: he had come with her first to Rome, where he attended her as a servant out of livery, and afterwards accompanied her to Naples. Zeluco, soon after his connexion with Nerina, saw something in this man's appearance which he did not relish, and he gave her a hint to that effect. Nerina instantly dismissed him with such an air of indifference as dissipated certain ideas which began to arise in the suspicious mind of Zeluco. The dismissal however was of little importance; the man remained secretly at Naples, and was admitted to the bed-chamber of Nerina when she thought herself secure of not being visited by Zeluco: those interviews were unknown to all the servants except Nerina's confidential maid, who was actually sitting up for the purpose of letting him out before the other servants should get up, when Zeluco entered so unexpectedly.

When Nerina heard the voice of her maid, she comprehended the reasons of her noisy remonstrances; and perceiving that Zeluco was breaking into the room, she instantly formed a resolution worthy of her abandoned character: she screamed, and accused her paramour of violence, with a view to convince Zeluco of her own innocence, and instigate him to put the man to death as a housebreaker. The scene however took a different turn, and Zeluco saw the whole in a true point of view.

When the person who was sent to Naples for the

surgeons was returning, he met Bertram, who had just mounted his horse, and, accompanied by the other servant, was going to the rendezvous: this person, knowing Zeluco's servant, informed him of the misfortune which had happened to his master. Bertram desired to be conducted as fast as possible to the house where Zeluco lay.

They overtook Carlostein and Mr. N——, who were riding to the appointed place. Bertram informed Mr. N—— of what he had just heard, and they all rode to the dwelling of Nerina.

Carlostein and Mr. N—— remained in the parlour, while Bertram introduced the surgeon and his assistant into the room in which Zeluco was. He stretched forth his hand to Bertram, saying, I am glad to see you; when my wound has been examined, I wish to have some conversation with you. In the mean time, added he, pointing to Nerina, let that woman be secured and kept separate from her maid; she is the cause of what has happened.

Zeluco had kept his own servant by him from the time he received the wound till Bertram with the others arrived; Nerina had also remained constantly in the room, and had often renewed her lamentations. Zeluco took no other notice of her, than by begging of her not to make a noise, for he was in great pain. His eyes were now open to her true character, and she attempted in vain to deceive him any more; yet he explained himself only by keeping a steady silence till Bertram came.

A more unpleasant party than this must have been, can hardly be conceived, consisting of Zeluco lying wounded on the bed of Nerina; Nerina herself in the most agonizing state of suspense. The servant of Zeluco was the only person of the company tolerably at his ease, and he was rather anxious that his master should die, that he might be relieved from a trouble-

some attendance ; and that Nerina, whom he heartily hated, might be hanged.

But when she heard herself so plainly accused by Zeluco, in the directions he addressed to Bertram, she began to vindicate her innocence with all that violence of vociferation which so often attends guilt. Being forced out of the room by the company, she and her maid were secured in separate chambers.

Zeluco suffered great pain while the state of his wound was examined : after dressing it, however, the surgeon gave him hopes of recovery, but declared it necessary that he should be kept quiet ; which, as he found himself easier and inclined to sleep after the dressing, Zeluco agreed to. He earnestly begged of Bertram not to leave the house ; who assuring him he had no such intention, they all left the room except one servant.

Bertram then joined Mr. N—— and Carlostein in the parlour, with the surgeon, who was the same that had formerly attended Zeluco. He spoke more dubiously of his recovery to these gentlemen than he had done to the patient himself ; and leaving an assistant to be at hand in case of accident, he set out for Naples, promising to return in the morning.

Bertram, with a frankness which belonged to his character, and which was encouraged by the appearance and manners of Carlostein, informed him by what accident he himself came there, and of the whole of his connexion with Zeluco ; he expressed a desire of knowing what was the origin of their quarrel, for he understood that Carlostein was the person Zeluco was to have met, had he not been prevented by the accident just mentioned.

Carlostein refrained from mentioning the real source of the quarrel, saying, it was an unlucky business, of a delicate nature, which he was not at liberty to reveal, expressing at the same time a humane concern

for the condition of Zeluco, and the highest esteem for Bertram, with whose character Mr. N—— had acquainted him.

Carlostein and Mr. N—— were still conversing with Bertram, when the officers of justice arrived. Zeluco being acquainted with this desired to see them; in the bitterest terms he accused Nerina of being an accomplice of the fellow who had stabbed him; declared that he recollected this man to be the same whom she had brought to Naples in her service, and had dismissed at his request. Nerina did not suspect that Zeluco had recognised this man; she therefore denied that she had ever seen him: but the maid, who was examined apart, acknowledged that he was the person who had formerly been in Nerina's service, and with whom she had been connected ever since. They were both carried to prison.

CHAPTER XCVI.

Carlostein visits Zeluco.

ZELUCO having demanded of Bertram whether he had heard any thing of the gentleman whom he was to have met, Bertram informed him that Carlostein was then in the house, and of his humane behaviour ever since he had heard of the unlucky accident.

Zeluco expressing a desire to speak with him alone, Carlostein was introduced.

It is doubtful, signor, said Zeluco, when, or if ever, it will be in my power to meet you in the way we had agreed upon; but it would be satisfactory to me in the mean time to know whether you and Captain Seidlits received from my wife the impressions which both of you seem to entertain.

Carlostein replied, that both he and Seidlits had re-

ceived the impressions he alluded to from certain circumstances they had themselves observed, without their having been pointed out by any third person whatever; that as for his own part, he had never once seen Laura since her being first taken ill; and that he knew she had been at great pains, both before and since her illness, to make her brother believe that she had lived on the best terms with her husband, and seemed extremely unhappy when she perceived that Captain Seidlits suspected the contrary, and had endeavoured by every means to convince him that his suspicion was ill founded.

Zeluco seemed satisfied with this explanation. I have a curiosity to know also, said he, if you have no objection, what was your inducement to draw upon yourself a quarrel which Captain Seidlits was sufficiently eager to make his own?

As you say this will afford you satisfaction, signor, replied Carlostein, I shall not scruple to tell you, that when I heard Captain Seidlits express himself in the manner he did to you at your last meeting, I thought it probably would produce a quarrel between you, which might end fatally to one or other; whichever fell, the consequence would be unfortunate for Madame de Seidlits and her daughter; the former must lose a son-in-law, and the latter a brother or husband; whereas my being your antagonist could not have such ill consequences; if the chance went against me, they would be deprived of no such near relation; and even in the event of your falling by my sword, they would be involved in less trouble than if you should owe your death to their nearest relation.

It is impossible not to admire your conduct, sir, said Zeluco; you must take a prodigious interest in these two ladies.

There are no two persons on earth, signor, for whom I have a greater regard; their virtues command

the esteem of all who have the honour of knowing them: but independent of my friendship for them, I will confess to you that another consideration had weight with me; I am indebted for my own life to the gallantry of Captain Seidlits; I was desirous therefore of seizing without his knowledge, a chance of repaying what I owed him, by taking the consequences, whatever they might be, of a meeting with you.

Captain Seidlits is much to be envied, said Zeluco with a sigh, in having such a friend;—perhaps, continued he, after a pause, it may yet be in my power to convince both you and your friend, that what you have mistaken in my conduct was entirely owing to the malice and base suggestions of the accursed woman who is carried to prison, and who, I trust, will meet the fate she so well deserves.

To this Carlostein made no reply; but the physician, who had also been sent for to visit Zeluco, arriving, put an end to their discourse.

The physician had not met the surgeon, and of course could have no just notion of the degree of danger in which Zeluco was; but finding him pretty free from fever, he ventured to pronounce still more favourably of the case than the surgeon had done; and, after giving some general directions, took his leave.

Bertram remained at Zeluco's earnest request, and by his orders had the direction of every thing in the family: for the house, and all within it, was the property of Zeluco, except the wearing apparel of Nerina, which she had been permitted to pack up; and what she did not take with her was left under the care of a maid in whom she placed confidence.

Carlostein and Mr. N—— returned to Naples after hearing the opinion of the physician.

Carlostein gave his friend Seidlits an account of the whole affair; stating it in such a manner, however, that his intended meeting with Zeluco appeared to

have been owing to a fortuitous rencounter with him the preceding evening. in which Zeluco had directly challenged him. Seidlits seemed displeased at his friend for concealing this.—How could I, my dear Seidlits, said Carlostein, shuffle over on you the answer of a challenge directly addressed to myself?—Would you have acted so?

Well, said Seidlits, recovering his good humour, although, from certain circumstances which I now recollect, I still suspect that some fraudulent practices have taken place on this occasion, yet I shall take no further notice of them: since however, added he, smiling, you tried to rob me of a small sprig of laurel, I rejoice that it has missed your head as well as mine.

They then informed Signora Sporza of all that had happened, leaving it to her to mention it to Madame de Seidlits when she found a fit opportunity; but they all agreed to keep it concealed from Laura, till the fate of Zeluco should be more fully ascertained.

Zeluco continued tolerably easy till towards midnight, when the pain of his wound became very severe; amidst his groans he poured forth horrid imprecations against Nerina.

The assistant surgeon, who had been left to attend him, finding that the fomentations and other means which he used to relieve the pain failed, spoke of sending to Naples for some laudanum, a few drops of which, he said, might be of service.

Zeluco hearing him give orders for that purpose, told the surgeon to search one of his pockets, where he found a phial full of that drug;—Zeluco having secretly provided himself with it, soon after a conversation with Nerina, which has been already mentioned.—Whether he would ever have used it for the purpose to which she meant to prompt him, can never be known, for the most profligate of mankind often

shrink from executing the crimes which they have in speculation.

The surgeon administered a dose of this medicine, which abated the pain, and gave him some hours rest.

CHAPTER XCVII.

“What nothing earthly gives, or can destroy,
The soul's calm sunshine, and the heart-felt joy,
Is virtue's prize.” POPE.

THE following morning early, Bertram, understanding that Zeluco was awake, entered his room to inquire how he was. Being then pretty easy and refreshed by sleep, he begged that Bertram would sit by his bedside; and as the story of Antonio had made some impression on him, he began to make more inquiry concerning him. After a few questions, he said to Bertram, On the whole, I perceive that this Savoyard has put you to a considerable deal of expense, as well as trouble.

I have already been amply repaid, said Bertram; but I still expect an additional recompense.

I understood the fellow *had nothing*, said Zeluco.

He has both a father and a mother, replied Bertram, very honest people as I have been told; they live at Chamerry, which is in my way home to Geneva; the poor old couple have been miserable on account of their son's misfortune. I shall have the pleasure of restoring him to them;—only think, signor, what satisfaction I shall have—their old hearts will be ready to burst with joy.—I often anticipate in my imagination the scene of their first meeting;—why, signor, a single scene of that kind is worth all the five acts of dull selfish life.

You enter into these people's happiness as if it were your own, said Zeluco.

A great part of it will be my own, said Bertram; I question if any of the three will be much happier than myself. You must have often felt, signor, what a pleasing sensation being the author of happiness conveys to the heart?

Zeluco seemed distressed, and made no reply.

I fear your wound gives you pain, said Bertram.

Not at all, said Zeluco:—And this is the only recompense you expect?

It is all I would accept of from man, replied Bertram; the consciousness of a good action is delightful when performed, and is also a source of pleasing recollection through life. Would to God I had more of them to boast of! Being conscious of but few, makes me perhaps too vain of this.

You have reason to be vain indeed, said Zeluco.

I am certain at least, rejoined Bertram, that I should have been lower in my own eyes had I acted otherwise:—yet I make no doubt but you, and many others, would have done the same thing with less hesitation than I showed.

Zeluco groaned.

I am heartily sorry to see you in so much pain, said Bertram: Shall I call the surgeon?

No, no, cried Zeluco; the surgeon cannot relieve me.

I fear talking does you harm; I'll leave——

Pray stay, said Zeluco; I shall be worse when you go.—Tell me, my friend, what fortune have you?

Bertram named a very moderate sum.

And with this you are happy! exclaimed Zeluco.

With this I am contented, replied Bertram; and I am happy in many other particulars;—riches cannot give happiness.

I'll be sworn they cannot, said Zeluco; yet I am.

surprised that you, who have been abroad in the world, and have seen extensive scenes of life, could be contented with so little.

Perhaps, replied Bertram, the circumstance you mention has contributed to it; for, limited as my circumstances always were, I saw multitudes of my fellow-creatures, in every country where I have been, much poorer than myself: but what had more influence than any thing in keeping me from discontent, was the remembrance of a maxim often repeated to me by my excellent father.

What is that maxim? said Zeluco.

When you are disposed to be vain of your mental acquirements, Bertram, said he, look up to those who are more accomplished than yourself, that you may be fired with emulation. But when you feel dissatisfied with your circumstances, look down on those beneath you, that you may learn contentment.

But even of the small pittance you mention, said Zeluco, you allowed a considerable proportion to your father?

For that I can claim no merit, said Bertram; it is only a proof that I am not a monster.—Ingratitude to a parent is the height of profligacy, including almost every kind of wickedness.

Zeluco started as if he had been stung by a serpent; the recollection of his own behaviour to his mother rushed on his mind with all the bitterness of remorse.

I really am grieved, signor, said Bertram, in a sympathizing tone of voice, to see you suffer so much.

I do indeed suffer, said Zeluco, after a long and painful pause.

I am sincerely sorry for it, resumed Bertram; I wish I knew what would give you relief;—but the medical people will be here soon;—they perhaps—

No, no, interrupted Zeluco, they cannot relieve me.

I hope, my good sir, continued Bertram, taking him by the hand, that after the next dressing your wound will become easier.

My wound is easier, said Zeluco with a voice of anguish; but I have deeper wounds which their skill cannot reach.

Alas! said Bertram, some mental affliction; the loss of some dear friend, perhaps, cut off by a similar but more fatal accident than what has now befallen you?—Have patience, my good sir, continued he, reflection, and the soothing hand of time——

I tell you, interrupted Zeluco, in the accent of despair, that I never had a friend; that time develops fresh sources of sorrow to me; and reflection drives me to madness.

Bertram, being greatly shocked, made no reply; and Zeluco, after a considerable interval, having recollected himself, said, with apparent composure, I have been feverish and restless; I know not what I say; but the pain seems now to abate, and I feel myself drowsy. Pray, my good friend, leave me;—perhaps I may get a little sleep before the surgeon arrives.

When Zeluco found himself alone—Happy man! said he, with a deep sigh, who can look back with pleasure and self-approbation, and forward with tranquillity and hope.—What false estimates are formed by mankind! This Bertram they will consider as an unfortunate man, yet he has never been unhappy, and has found many sources of enjoyment unknown to me. I have been reckoned remarkably fortunate, although I have never known what happiness is. His life has been devoted to duty, and mine to enjoyment; yet it is evident he has had more enjoyment in his pursuit than I ever had in mine; I begin to think that pleasure is most frequently found while we are on

some more worthy pursuit, and missed by those who are in search of nothing else. "O fool! fool! to sacrifice the permanent rewards of virtue, without enjoying the only allurements of vice." After having passed my life hitherto in disquietude, I am now stretched on a bed of danger, without a friend, or one person I can trust, except this stranger Bertram, on whom I have no claim but that of humanity and benevolence, which I myself have so little practised.

After these general reflections on his past conduct, when he turned his thoughts to Laura, all his former causes of suspicion appeared in their native weakness; for anguish, languor, and humbled pride, presented her conduct in a more candid point of view, untinged by the medium of jealousy, and stripped of the glosses of Nerina. Ah, that perfidious and accursed woman! exclaimed he, endeavouring to relieve the anguish of his own conscience, by throwing the greater part of the guilt upon another; I should never have behaved as I did to the most virtuous of women, had I not been instigated by a dæmon.

In reflections of this kind, and in resolutions of altering his system of life, Zeluco passed the time till the surgeon arrived to dress his wound. Upon this second examination, the surgeon was confirmed in the opinion he had formed at the first, that the wound was mortal; he thought proper to tell Zeluco, however, that it looked as well as he expected, and added other expressions of an encouraging nature.

When he returned to the parlour, he found Carlöstein with Bertram, and immediately after Father Mulo also arrived.

The surgeon then fairly told them, that although he had said nothing to his patient which would depress his spirits, yet he had now little or no hopes of his recovery.

If that is your real opinion, said Father Mulo, why did you not inform the unhappy gentleman of the danger he is in?

Because it is my business, father, replied the surgeon, to cure him, if it is possible, and not to diminish the very small chance of his recovery by disagreeable news.

You acted otherwise when you attended him formerly, replied Father Mulo; for you then made him believe he was in more danger than was really the case.

That is a remark, my reverend father, said the surgeon, which I hardly could have expected from you; yet you are too learned in your profession not to know the *use of terror* in rendering mankind obedient. At the time you allude to, it was expedient to give this gentleman a strong idea of his danger, that he might submit to the regimen necessary for his cure; but at present it would disquiet him without being of any manner of use.

Why, sir, rejoined the monk, it may be of the greatest use.

In my humble opinion, said the surgeon, it cannot be of the least, as I dare say those gentlemen will acknowledge when I declare, I do not think it possible he can live above two, or at most three days.

Jesus Maria! cried the father, turning up his eyes; why, for that very reason, sir, it is your indispensable duty, on such an occasion, to tell him the truth!

There is no cause for being in a heat, father, said the surgeon, bowing; but I cannot think it consistent with *politeness* to tell a gentleman a disagreeable and unnecessary truth on *any* occasion.—I will refer it to this gentleman, continued he, addressing himself to Carlostein, who he knew had been at Paris, whether in France such a thing would not be considered as quite unpardonable?

How it would be considered in France is very little to the purpose, said Father Mulo; the important point is, how it will be considered in the other world, where the manner of thinking is very different from what it is in France.

That is saying a severer thing of the other world than I should have expected from a man of your cloth, said the surgeon.

Will you, or will you not, go directly and acquaint your patient of his danger? said Father Mulo.

You cannot possibly imagine, my good father, replied the surgeon, that I will behave so *unpolitely* to a gentleman, especially when he is on the point of leaving the world.

Why, sir, rejoined the father warmly, by concealing his danger from him he may die without confession, and his soul of course will be lost for ever.

As for his soul, and whether it shall be lost or saved, that is his affair, or yours, if you please, my good father; but it is mine not to deviate from the laws of *good-breeding* and *politeness*. So saying, with a low bow to the company, he stepped into his carriage, and drove to Naples.

CHAPTER XCVIII.

“Thou canst enter the dark cell
Where the vulture Conscience slumbers,
And unarm’d by charming spell,
Or magic numbers,
Canst rouse her from her formidable sleep,
And bid her dart her raging talons deep.” MASON.

ON his departure, Father Mulo showed great impatience to be introduced into Zeluco’s bed chamber, and to acquaint him with the dangerous state he was

in, that every ceremony requisite for his salvation might be performed without loss of time. Captain Seidlits and Bertram being protestants, and thinking that the intended ceremony of confession would not do so much good, as the monk's abrupt manner of communicating the immediate necessity of it would do harm, endeavoured to persuade him to defer it a little, as Zeluco seemed disposed to sleep when the surgeon left him. While they disputed the point, the physician arrived: he had met with the surgeon, who had informed him that there was now a certainty of the bowels being pierced in such a manner as to leave very little or no hopes of the patient's recovery.

It was the opinion of all present, that this information would come with more propriety from him than from Father Mulo: out of tenderness to the unhappy man, therefore, he was desired to convey it.

With whatever delicacy the annunciation was made by the physician, it seemed greatly to shock the patient, for till that moment he had little doubt of his surviving. He immediately renewed all his curses and imprecations against Nerina, with such violence, that the physician thought proper to withdraw. What repelled the doctor attracted the monk. Father Mulo entered, and began an exhortation which had by no means the same soporific effect on Zeluco with the former, of which we have made mention, but seemed on the contrary to throw him almost into convulsions. You see, my worthy father, said Bertram, that he is in too much pain to listen to your admonitions at present; you had best leave him a little, and perhaps, after he has recovered the shock he has just received, he will be able to profit by your kind intentions.

After Father Mulo had been with difficulty removed, Zeluco desired to see the physician again, of whom he inquired once more if there absolutely was no hope of his recovery. The physician expressed

much uneasiness at being obliged to confirm the opinion which he had already given ; adding, that although the wound, from the different functions of the parts injured, was not so *immediately* mortal, yet he feared it would prove as *certainly* so as if the poniard had pierced his heart. Zeluco then asked, how long the physician thought he could live ? to which the other answered, there was reason to believe he could not suffer above two or three days longer.

Zeluco made no answer, and continued several hours without speaking a word to any body, but sometimes muttered indistinct sentences to himself, and showed marks of impatience when any discourse was addressed to him. He at length inquired whether Captain Seidlits had been to call for him, and expressed a desire of seeing him. The captain, who was just taking his horse to go to Naples, immediately returned, and was introduced to Zeluco's bed-chamber, every other person being requested to retire. Zeluco then addressed him to the following effect :

Amidst many sources of regret, none affects me so sensibly, sir, as my behaviour to your sister. Prompted by headstrong passion, I used every means I could devise, some of them not justifiable, to prevail on her to consent to a marriage to which I plainly saw she had a rooted dislike. When by the continuation of my artifices, and the persuasion of her mother, she gave a reluctant consent, it might have been expected that, happy in the attainment of my wishes, I should have behaved with kindness and affection to her, however difficult it was for her to behave in the same manner towards me. The fact was otherwise : had I conducted myself with half the good nature to the wife I really esteemed, and even admired, that *she* did to the husband she disliked, I should not feel the remorse I now do. On recalling to my memory the whole of her conduct, I cannot charge her with a

single impropriety ; but in spite of her most blameless conduct, I plainly saw she did not love me ; every duty of a wife which was in her power, she fulfilled ; her affection it was impossible for her to place upon me, and this I had the injustice to consider as an injury. I indulged groundless suspicions, which were cherished, and new ones of the most profligate nature were suggested, by a devil in the shape of a woman, who, by the wickedest artifices, entangled my affections, stimulated my passions into madness, and was the cause of even involuntary crimes. I earnestly hope she will be brought to the punishment her guilt and perfidy deserve. I earnestly hope—but let me drive her from my thoughts,—let no more time be lost, but let me at length make all the expiation in my power.

I was willing that you should know, sir, that these were my sentiments, which at a proper time you will communicate to the most virtuous and deserving of women.

Seidlits was affected. The wretched condition to which he saw the man reduced, had long dissipated all his animosity ; with a sympathizing accent which was not very usual to him, and a sincerity which never forsook him, he expressed wishes for his recovery. Zeluco shook his head, as if he thought that entirely out of the question, and Seidlits withdrew.

Zeluco then directed Bertram to send to Naples for his lawyer, who arrived in a short time, and received orders regarding his last will, which were executed in due form, and signed by Zeluco the following morning, in the presence of certain persons who came from Naples at his request for that purpose.

CHAPTER XCIX.

"Hail, piety! triumphant goodness, hail!

Hail, O prevailing, ever O prevail!

At thine intreaty, justice leaves to frown,

And wrath appeasing lays the thunder down;

The tender heart of yearning mercy burns."

PARNELL.

THE following day Laura was informed for the first time of her husband's being wounded, and that he was thought to be in danger. She was much more shocked at the intelligence than Signora Sporza, who communicated it, thought she had reason to be. Signora Sporza proceeded to inform her of the particulars,—on what occasion the accident had happened, and at what place her husband was then lying: those circumstances made no alteration in the feelings of Laura. May Heaven in mercy, cried she, prolong his life till he is better prepared for death! O how dreadful for him to be hurried into eternity now! Signora Sporza insinuated something regarding the wretched prospect which Laura would have before her with such a husband, in case of his recovery. Ah! cried Laura, is my temporal wretchedness to be put in the scale against his eternal misery? Almighty God, have compassion upon him! exclaimed she, leaving Signora Sporza, and retiring to her bed-chamber, where she immediately fell upon her knees before a crucifix, and, every selfish consideration being annihilated in her breast, with all the sincerity of the most sublime piety, she poured forth her prayers to the fountain of mercy, that the life of her husband might be preserved, and that Heaven might inspire him with repentance, and extend mercy to him.

Returning to the room where her mother now was with Signora Sporza, she inquired for her brother, and

was told he had gone early the same morning to see Zeluco.—Has my brother sent no message since? said Laura. Madame de Seidlits and Signora Sporza looked at each other as if they hesitated what answer they should give. I perceive you *have* heard from him, cried Laura. Pray tell me how it is with the unfortunate man? Alas, I fear he is worse.

It is surprising, said Signora Sporza, that you show so much concern for one, who, had this not happened, might have been the cause of your brother's or your friend Carlostein's death.

Heaven be praised, they are both alive, and well, cried Laura, whereas this unhappy man is — Ah! tell me how he is? What account have you received from my brother?—The account is not favourable, my dear, said Madame de Seidlits. Alas, he is gone! cried Laura. Merciful Heaven! has he been hurried off so suddenly!—Show her the captain's letter, said Madame de Seidlits. Signora Sporza then gave Laura a letter which she had received from Captain Seidlits a little before she informed Laura of what had befallen her husband, but which she abstained from showing her upon seeing her so much affected. The letter was in the following words:

“ Dear Madam,

“ THE surgeons in the presence of the physician have just examined the wound; their opinions are the same as before, notwithstanding some of the attendants had begun to entertain hopes of a favourable turn, on account of his being a great deal easier for these two hours than he has ever been since he received the wound; he seems very weak and languid; he sometimes mentions my sister, and once inquired if she was in the house, but in a manner as if he wished rather than expected it: on being told she was not—How could I imagine she would? said he. Why should

she think of a wretch like me?—I own I am affected at the dismal condition of this poor man. Yet it were highly improper that Laura should see him; it would be disagreeable to her, and might have very bad effects on her health; I imagine it would be right, however, to let her know in general what has happened, and the danger in which he is. You will consult with Madame de Seidlits on this subject. I shall probably not leave this place till the evening.

“ I am, &c. &c.”

I *will* go and see him, cried Laura, as soon as she had perused the letter. Madame de Seidlits and Signora Sporza endeavouring to dissuade her—I conjure you, my dear mother, said she, as you value the future peace of my mind, do not oppose me. My sincere sympathy may comfort him in this sad hour of—Pray, do not oppose my inclination. Indeed I must go. Fearing that stronger opposition might have worse consequences than the interview they dreaded, the carriage was ordered, and Laura, with her mother, immediately proceeded to the house in which Zeluco lay.

Laura passed the whole time in which they were on the road in ejaculations and fervent prayers to Heaven, to look with an eye of mercy and compassion on her wretched husband.

When they arrived, Captain Seidlits came to the door of the carriage.—O brother, how is he? cried Laura. Seidlits shook his head, and was silent. Ah, miserable man, exclaimed she, he is gone!—It is but a few minutes, said Seidlits, since he breathed his last.—All-merciful God, have compassion on his soul! cried Laura.

Madame de Seidlits then ordered the coach to return with them to Naples. Laura passed the interval of her return in the same manner she had done when

going : and, being arrived at Naples, she intreated her mother, instead of driving directly home, to stop at the church in which they usually heard mass ; and there kneeling before the altar, she spent some time in mental prayer for the soul of her husband. After which, she sent for the priest, and directed that a certain number of masses might be performed for the same pious purpose.

Any person, ignorant of the real case, would naturally have imagined that Laura had been the happiest of women in her marriage ; for no woman deprived suddenly of the husband of her heart, was ever touched with more sincere anguish for her own misfortune, than the compassionate and benevolent breast of Laura was with generous solicitude for the eternal welfare of the husband who had used her so ill, and whom she had during his life detested.

When the last will of Zeluco came to be examined, which it was soon after his death, in the presence of two of the magistrates of Naples, of Captain Seidlitz, Bertram, and others, it appeared that he had left his paternal estate in Sicily to a distant relation, who was his natural heir ; and the rest of his fortune, which was of much greater value, to his widow, burthened with a few legacies, of which the principal was one of two thousand pistoles to Bertram, and another of one thousand to Captain Seidlitz.

The relation of Zeluco to whom he left the estate had always been neglected by him, and had not the least expectation of the good fortune which now befel him. On his arrival at Naples, Laura, having heard him spoken of as a man of worth, and that he had a family of children, made a considerable present in ready money to each of his children. She desired this gentleman also to give her a list of such of her husband's relations as were in bad circumstances : she had often made the same request to Zeluco with a view to

assist them ; but he had always evaded it, and showed so much ill-humour every time she made the request, that she never had been able to put her good intentions towards those people in execution. The legacy to Bertram was immediately paid, to which Laura made a considerable addition, and he soon after set out with Antonio for Geneva, esteemed and loved by all who had known him.

Laura also used her interest to have Nerina treated with lenity while she was detained in confinement ; and, as it was clear that she was not directly accessory to the murder of Zeluco, she used her influence to soften the minds of the judges, who were violently prejudiced against Nerina ; so that she was at last liberated, and immediately afterwards left Naples.

CHAPTER C.

The conclusion.

CAPTAIN Seidlits's leave of absence was now nearly expired ; he had often expressed his wishes that Madame de Seidlits and Laura would return to Germany with him ; and urged, among other reasons, that it was expedient for his sister's health, and the tranquillity of her mind, that she were removed from a place where so many objects would awaken painful recollections ; asserting, at the same time, that his mother-in-law and sister would now live much more happily in Germany than at Naples.

Signora Sporza had mentioned to Captain Seidlits her opinion that Carlostein was enamoured of his sister ; but, from a delicacy natural to the sex, she gave no hint concerning what she was as fully persuaded of, namely, Laura's partiality for him. Seidlits readily believed what he wished to be true, and the high idea

he had of his friend left him no doubt that their love was mutual.

Although Signora Sporza had communicated only one half of her opinion on this subject to the captain, she unfolded the whole to Madame de Seidlits, who embraced the idea with great satisfaction; and the proposal of returning to Berlin became more agreeable to her from that moment.

It is probable that Laura relished the plan of ultimately settling in Germany full as much as her mother; but she was solicitous to see certain distant relations of Zeluco established in a manner which he had pointed out, and in which she wished to assist them; the arrangements she had made for this purpose could not be effectual without her presence; nor could they be properly finished in the short interval that remained before her brother would be under the necessity of leaving Naples.

In the mean time Carlostein received a letter from the Prussian minister at Berlin, acquainting him that he was nominated by the king to an office at court which had just become vacant; and hinting that he would pay his court in a manner very acceptable to his majesty, by returning immediately with his friend Seidlits, without waiting for the expiration of his own leave of absence.

The pleasure which Carlostein would have felt from the knowledge of this mark of his sovereign's favour, did not prevent the hint with which it was accompanied from distressing him greatly. His passion for Laura, and his admiration of her conduct, were higher now than ever; and she continued to behave to him with every proper mark of confidence and esteem. But he plainly perceived that the death of Zeluco, and the circumstances attending it, had made a strong impression upon her, and had put her into a frame of mind which ill accorded with the subject that en-

grossed his. He therefore abstained from any direct declaration of his sentiments to her, and it is probable would not have ventured on any thing of that nature so soon, had it not been for this letter from Berlin; but he could not think of leaving Naples in the same undecided state, with regard to what he considered as the most important object of his life.

Without mentioning the contents of the minister's letter even to his friend Seidlits, therefore, he watched an opportunity of speaking to Laura alone; and then in the warmest language of respectful love he declared his admiration of her virtues, the sincerity of his passion, and the supreme wish of his heart.

The whole of Carlostein's conduct left no doubt of his sincerity in the mind of Laura, yet she showed some surprise at the precipitancy of these declarations. —I would have waited, continued Carlostein, for opportunities of giving stronger proofs than have hitherto been in my power of my attachment; before I had ventured to mention the honour and happiness to which I aspire, had I not received intelligence by yesterday's post, which fills my heart with ten thousand disquietudes.

Intelligence! cried Laura.

Of the most cruel import, said Carlostein; which threatens to tear me, when I least expected, from all my soul holds dear.

What do you mean? interrupted she, with an alarmed voice, and becoming instantly pale; pray, explain yourself.

Carlostein then gave her the minister's letter, which she took with an unsteady hand.

Having perused it, she said, I see nothing here but good news; his majesty, I find, has done you the honour to appoint you to an office near his person.

Carlostein pointed to the passage which hinted that the king expected him to return with Captain Seidlits;

and, renewing his addresses, declared, that his happiness depended on her; that, if he could flatter himself with the hope of her favour, he would immediately write to the minister in such terms as he had no doubt would procure him his majesty's approbation of his prolonging his stay at Naples; that no consideration could prevail on —

Laura interrupted him, desiring that he would not insist on a subject which she thought unbecoming her, as she was then situated, to listen to, adding, that she would not attempt to conceal the sentiments of esteem which she had always felt for him; she acknowledged that she valued his good opinion and friendship above that of any other man; that with respect to the minister's letter, she believed that such a hint as it contained, coming from a king or minister, was generally thought equivalent to a command; that he certainly could not consider it in any other light, and must act accordingly; that, independent of the minister's letter, she imagined there were considerations which might determine him not to remain longer at Naples, and would oblige her not to receive his visits after the departure of her brother.

Carlostein seemed uneasy, and remained for some time silent after this declaration; but, recollecting himself, he said, Your brother, I believe, is not entirely without hopes that Madame de Seidlitz may be persuaded to leave this country, and return immediately with him to Germany.

My mother is so good as to assure me, said Laura, that she will never separate herself from me, and certain affairs which I think indispensable will detain me a long time after my brother's departure.

A long time! repeated Carlostein with an accent of sorrow.

I shall think it a long time, said she, with a smile

and a look which conveyed happiness to the heart of Carlostein ; for I do assure you, added she, that there is nothing which I wish more sincerely than to return to my native country.

Carlostein, being now more assured in the hopes which he could not help indulging, did not venture to urge her further ; for, however favourable to him her sentiments might be, he plainly perceived that Laura thought it indelicate to admit of his addresses so soon after the death of her husband.

Immediately after leaving her, he communicated the minister's letter to his friend Seidlits, informing him at the same time that he would accompany him home.

The interval between this time and that of their departure, was spent almost entirely with Madame de Seidlits, Signora Sporza, and Laura ; Mr. N— was very frequently of the parties, every individual of the society having the highest esteem for that gentleman.

Carlostein earnestly wished to correspond with Laura after he should leave Naples. As she stood at a window apart from the rest of the company, he seized the occasion, and solicited her permission to write to her. Laura beckoned to her mother, who having joined them, she said, The baron, my dear madam, proposes to write to *us*, which I dare say will be very agreeable to you, and will prevent our having so much reason to regret my brother's want of punctuality.

Madame de Seidlits, although she was convinced that the proposal was intended for Laura only, answered, that *they* should be happy to hear from him as often as his leisure permitted him to write.

The day immediately preceding the departure of Carlostein and Seidlits was to this society mournful, but not unhappy ; the flow of the virtuous and tender

affections of the heart, of benevolence, gratitude, friendship, and love, are never without enjoyment.

“ ————— Who, that bears

A human bosom, hath not often felt
How dear are all those ties which bind our race
In gentleness together, and how sweet
Their force, let fortune's wayward hand the while
Be kind or cruel? —”

AKENSIDE.

Targe and Buchanan supped together *tête-à-tête* the same evening; they felt a mutual regard for each other, a mutual sorrow at the thought of separating, and they mutually agreed that the best way of disposing of sorrow is to wash it away with wine.

When the night was far advanced, Buchanan rose, shook his friend very cordially by the hand, saying, As you are to be up so early in the morning, I will not keep you any longer from your bed. So, God bless you, my dear Duncan!

Nay, God shall not bless me these three hours, said Targe; for, as I am to rise so early, I do not think it worth while to go to bed this night; so sit you down on your seat, George, and let us have a fresh bottle without further ceremony.

Buchanan, not being in a humour to dispute a point of this kind, immediately complied, slapping Targe upon the shoulder, and singing the following line from an old Scottish song:

“ He's the king of good fellows, and *wale** of auld men.”

and never made another offer of taking leave, till he saw Targe ready to set out with his master and Carlstein.

The latter wrote from the various towns of Italy and Germany in the course of their journey to Berlin, addressing his letters alternately to Madame de Seid-

* Wale, or choice.

lits and to Laura. Captain Seidlits, who was not in love, and hated letter-writing, was contented with occasionally adding a postscript of a few sentences to Carloststein's letters.

This correspondence continued with equal regularity after their arrival at Berlin; and Carloststein, who had repeatedly begged of Madame de Seidlits to let him know the exact time when she and Laura intended to leave Italy, at length wrote to her that he should be happy to return to Naples, that he might have the honour of accompanying them to Berlin, and earnestly entreated her to use her influence with Laura to consent to that measure; for which, he said, he was assured of the king's permission.

Madame de Seidlits could not give a satisfactory answer for a considerable time, because, although Laura herself was impatient to leave Naples, yet she had resolved to remain till she settled her affairs in such a manner as not to require her returning: this she accomplished at length, having at the same time gratified her own benevolent and generous disposition by doing, what she called, justice to the relations of Zeluco in a degree far beyond their expectations; and so as to procure their fervent prayers for her happiness, and the admiration of all who were acquainted with her behaviour.

At the approach of summer, Madame de Seidlits gave Carloststein the joyful news, that Laura and she were immediately to set out on their return to Germany, and that they could not think of putting him to the inconveniency of coming so far as Naples, especially as his friend Mr. N—, being to return at the same time to England, had offered to accompany them the whole way to Berlin; that they had agreed to accept of his escort, however, no further than to Milan, which did not lead him out of the route that at all events he would have taken. At Milan, Madame de

Seidlits added, she had a friend who would accompany them to Dresden; and, as they could not reach that city for a considerable time after the Prussian reviews were over, she hoped it would not be inconvenient to Carlostein to meet them there, at a time which she mentioned, from whence he might accompany them to Berlin.

When Madame de Seidlits, Laura, and Signora Sporza, attended by Mr. N—, arrived at the inn at Milan, they were greatly surprised to find Carlostein and Captain Seidlits ready to hand them out of the carriage. Seidlits had received his mother-in-law's letter during the reviews; his friend and he set out for Milan soon after, and arrived some time before the ladies.

The unexpected appearance of these two gentlemen certainly occasioned an agreeable sensation to the company just arrived; but it was too strong for the sensibility of Laura. She could not help being a good deal agitated, the consciousness of which increased her confusion: every body observed the manner in which she was affected, and all had the delicacy to impute it to the fatigue of the journey. Laura soon recovered her usual serenity, and the whole party spent a few very happy weeks at Milan; during which Mr. N— received a letter from the earl his father, informing him that Miss Warren had consented to give her hand to his friend Steele, to the infinite satisfaction of old Mr. Transfer and Mrs. Steele, as well as that of Lady Elizabeth and the earl himself; and that the nuptial ceremony was delayed till Mr. N—'s arrival in England, all parties being desirous that he should be present on that happy occasion.

This intelligence afforded much pleasure to Mr. N—, who had great good-will towards Steele, a very high esteem for Miss Warren, and was besides of

a frame of mind which takes delight in the happiness of others. With this charming disposition Mr. N— must have been highly gratified in the contemplation of the company he was then in, every individual of which was in a state of felicity.

Signora Sporza, who loved Laura with an affection little inferior to that of her mother, could not conceal her joy in the persuasion she had of the approaching happiness of her young friend ; for it was now obvious that her marriage with Carlostein would take place soon after their arrival at Berlin. Captain Seidlits was delighted with the idea of his beloved sister's being united to the man whom of all mankind he loved and esteemed the most. The satisfaction of Madame de Seidlits, it may be easily supposed, was equal to theirs. Laura and Carlostein saw in each other all that their imaginations conceived as amiable ; and they beheld in the faces of their surrounding friends a generous joy at the prospect of their felicity, and an impatience to see them speedily united.

It would have been difficult for Mr. N— to have resisted the importunities of his friends, and his own inclination, to accompany them to Berlin, had he not received the letter above mentioned from his father : this determined him to follow the plan he had formed on leaving Naples.

After expressing hopes of meeting again in Germany, or perhaps in England, Mr. N— took a most affectionate leave of a company he so greatly esteemed, carrying with him the friendship and best wishes of every person in it. The ladies, escorted by Carlostein and Captain Seidlits, set out for Berlin on the same day that Mr. N— took his route for Geneva, where he proposed to pass a few days with Bertram, and endeavour, if possible, to prevail on him to accompany him to England.

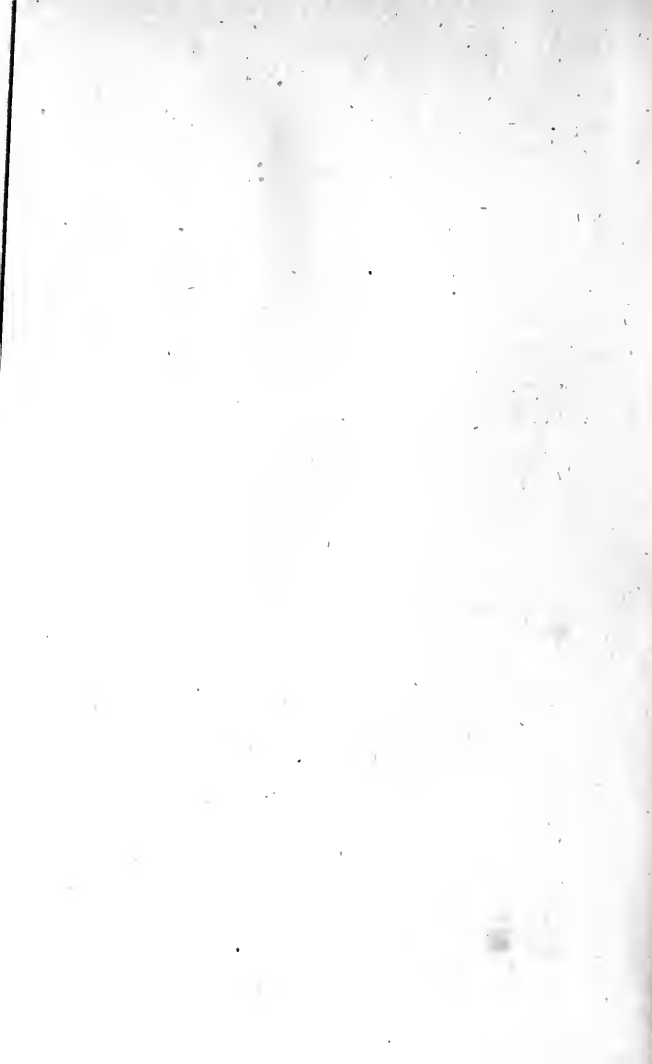
On his arrival at Turin, where he stopped only one night, he wrote an answer to his father's letter, the conclusion of which was in the following terms:

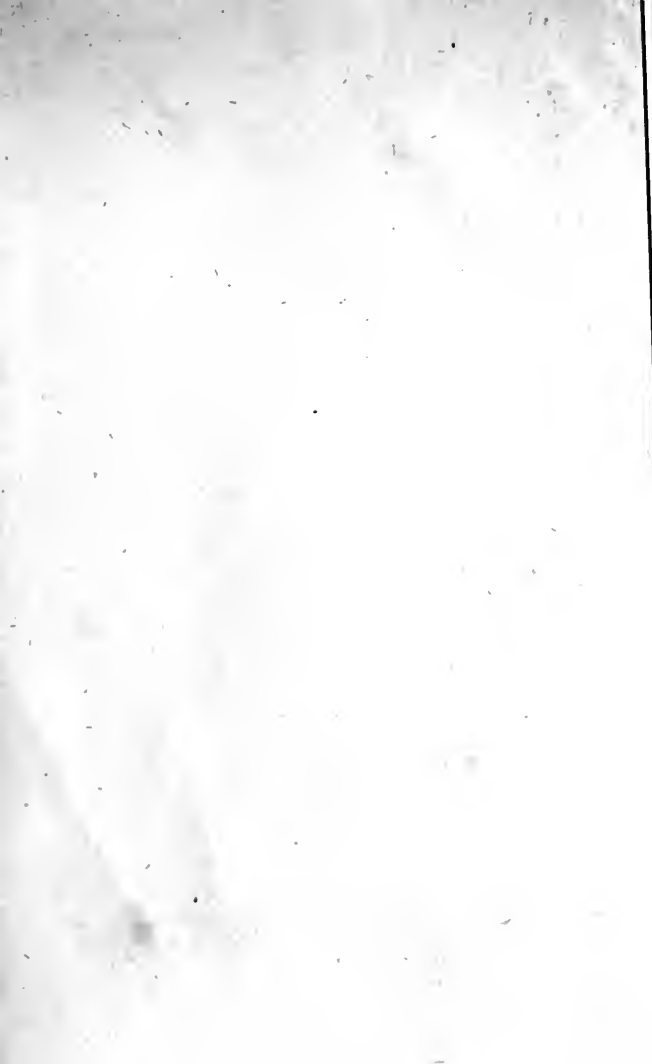
"I AM every day more confirmed in the truth of what you, my dear sir, took so much pains to impress early on my mind, that misery is inseparable from vice, and that the concurrence of every fortunate circumstance cannot produce happiness, or even tranquillity, independent of conscious integrity.

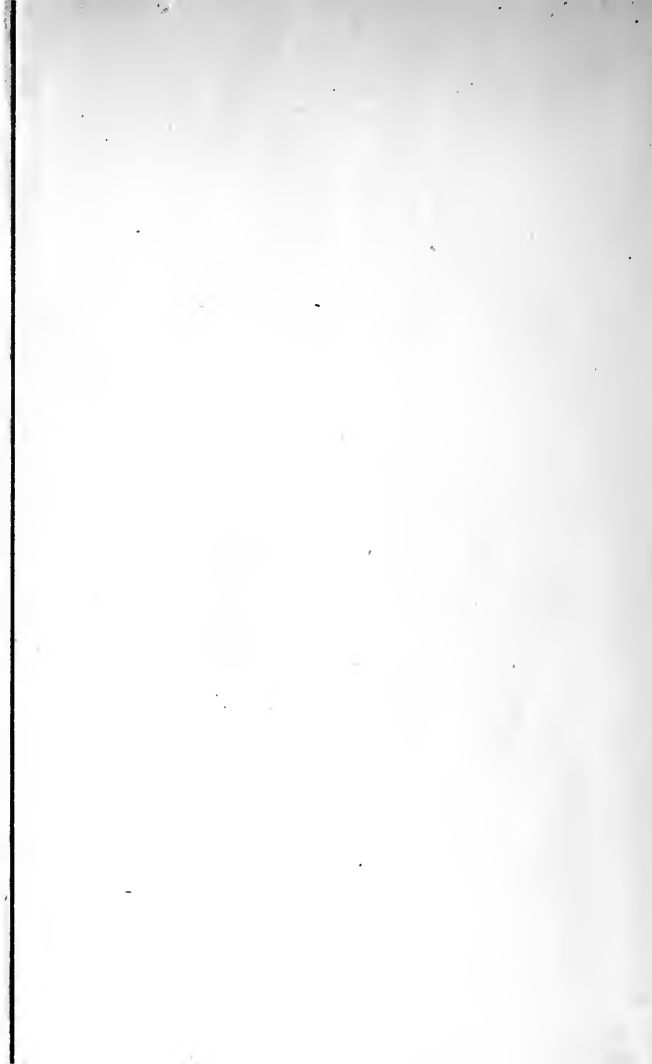
"Had I harboured doubts on this head, the fate of a person with whom I had some acquaintance at Naples, would have served to dissipate them; the particulars of this wretched man's story I will communicate to you at more leisure. I need only mention at present, that with every advantage of person, birth, and fortune, and united by marriage to the most beautiful and accomplished woman I ever had the happiness of knowing, he was miserable through the whole of his life, entirely owing to the selfishness and depravity of his heart. I am equally convinced that it is not in the power of external circumstances to render that man, who is in possession of integrity and the blessing of an applauding conscience, so wretched as the person above alluded to often was in the midst of prosperity and apparent happiness. An acquaintance I lately formed with another person, a citizen of Geneva, of a character the reverse of the former, and whom I am not without hopes of presenting to you at my return, tends to confirm this opinion, and to convince me that the poet is right in declaring,

"The broadest mirth unfeeling Folly wears,
Less pleasing far than Virtue's very tears."

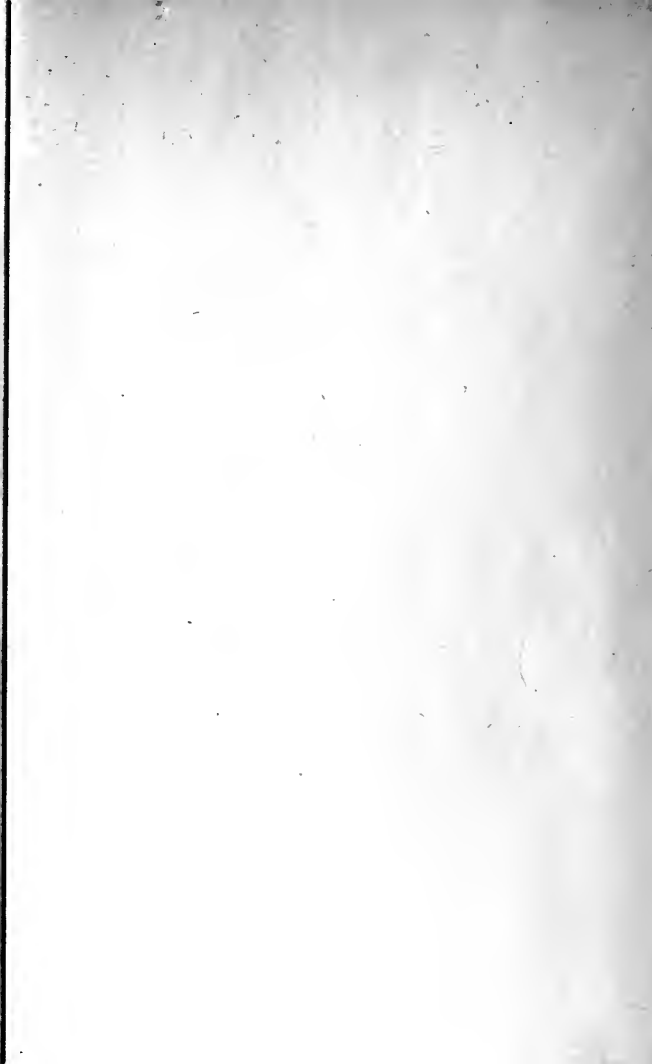
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